Foreign and European Policy Report 2013

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Assistance services available to Austrian citizens abroad are detailed on the website of the Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs at www.bmeia.gv.at.
FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN POLICY REPORT

2013

Report by the Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
On 16 December 2013, I was sworn in as Federal Minister for European and International Affairs and commissioned with heading today’s Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs. Over the last twelve months, the Ministry has dealt intensively with a number of trouble spots and challenges faced at foreign and European policy level, which continue to determine its agenda.

The main political challenge to be tackled in 2013 was the conflict in Syria, which has caused so much bloodshed and reached a shocking low with the use of chemical weapons. To date, the conflict has claimed more than a hundred thousand lives and forced millions of people to flee. It has not only unleashed a humanitarian crisis of unprecedented dimensions, but also constitutes an enormous burden on Syria’s neighbours due to the flows of refugees it has triggered. Austria has provided more than 8 million euros for the provision of primary care to Syrian refugees, supported the programme for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and has from the very beginning consistently advocated keeping the doors open to a political solution in order to preserve a united, pluralist Syria.

Reacting to the increasing escalation of violence, Austria was thus one of the first countries that called for a referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court – in order to make it very clear to fighters on all sides that all those who commit or order others to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity will be held accountable.

In 2013, we also witnessed the emergence of a development which remains of serious concern to the international community. In November, the Ukrainian government announced that it would not sign the long-planned Association Agreement with the EU. This decision set off a chain of events that resulted in the illegal occupation of Crimea by Russia and civil-war-like conditions in East Ukraine. On 14 November 2013, Austria took over the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and made pro-active use of this international function to contribute towards de-escalating the situation. The meeting between the Foreign Ministers of Russia and the Ukraine at the Council of Europe Ministerial Conference in Vienna in May 2014 definitely sent out a clear signal in this context.

The year 2013 was, however, also marked by some positive developments, for instance in the Western Balkans – the key priority region of Austrian
Foreword

The agreement reached between Serbia and Kosovo under the leadership of High Representative Catherine Ashton laid the foundation for a further normalisation of bilateral relations. Thus a central obstacle to these states’ rapprochement with the EU was removed, sending out a courageous and important signal to the entire Western Balkans. For Austria, which has such close links with this region, this development is also highly relevant. An important expression of our commitment to the Balkan states’ rapprochement with the EU was the European Forum Wachau 2013, where the Heads of Government of Serbia and Kosovo, Ivica Dačić and Hashim Thaçi, for the first time met in a bilateral context.

Along with the EU accession of Croatia as 28th Member State, which Austria pro-actively supported, the year 2013 was characterised at EU level by the difficult negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020. In the context of these negotiations, Austria particularly advocated consideration of rural development and of investment in future-oriented areas such as research and education. Austria furthermore contributed very intensively to the discussion on the necessary strengthening of the Economic and Monetary Union. In the human rights field, the adoption of the EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, which are based on an Austrian initiative, represented a special success for Austria. Thanks to these Guidelines it has been possible to create a transparent and effective instrument for the protection of both freedom of religion and religious minorities in the context of human rights-related EU foreign policy and to ensure the systematic consideration of this topic.

Austria has not only positioned itself as an opinion leader in the thematic field of freedom of religion or belief and protection of religious minorities within the EU, but has also continued to successfully provide a platform for dialogue among religions and cultures. By hosting the 5th Global Forum of the UN Alliance of Civilisations, held in the presence of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and more than 1,000 participants, Vienna presented itself as a traditional “hub for dialogue” in the fight against polarisation and extremism. At the same time, the meeting sent out a signal for the future by holding a special youth event that focused on very specific topics such as the fate of the African minority in Tunisia, joint sports activities for Israelis and Palestinians, improving the living conditions of women in Liberia or high-quality cultural journalism in Kosovo.

In 2013, the Foreign Ministry also proved its professional crisis management capabilities. The civil war in Syria with its impact on the neighbouring states, an abduction in Yemen, attacks in Algeria and Kenya as well as natural disasters such as the typhoon in the Philippines affected many Austrian citizens. It is also thanks to the Ministry’s comprehensive and competent crisis management that no Austrian was seriously injured or even killed in any of these crises.
Foreword

This brief and limited overview already reflects the wide range of areas in which staff at headquarters and at our representations abroad are actively involved on a daily basis. I should thus like to take this opportunity to thank all Ministry employees and my predecessor Vice Chancellor Dr. Michael Spindelegger as well as Dr. Reinhold Lopatka for their dedication and untiring efforts in the service of Austrians.

Sebastian Kurz
Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs
# Table of Contents

Foreword ........................................................................................................................................... III

1. **Worldwide at Your Service – Services provided by the FMEIA to Austrians abroad**................................. 1

   1.1. Worldwide at Your Service: Services the FMEIA provided worldwide to Austrians abroad in 2013.......................... 1

   1.1.1. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management .................. 1

   1.2. General Consular and Legal Issues........................................ 2

   1.2.1. Citizens’ Desk .................................................................. 2

   1.2.2. Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters .................. 3

   1.3. Tourist and Cross-border Traffic .......................................... 4

   1.3.1. Visas .................................................................................. 4

   1.4. Austrians abroad ................................................................. 6

   1.4.1. Organisations representing Austrians abroad ............ 6

   1.4.2. Support for Austrian Citizens abroad ......................... 7

   1.4.3. Participation by Austrians abroad in Political Decision Making in Austria and the European Union .......... 8

2. **Austria in the European Union** .......................................................................................... 10

   2.1. Introduction ......................................................................... 10

   2.1.1. European Year of Citizens 2013 ..................................... 13

   2.2. Austria in the Institutions of the European Union ............ 14

   2.2.1. The Permanent Representation of Austria to the European Union ................................................................. 15

   2.2.2. Austrians in the EU Institutions ..................................... 15

   2.2.3. The European Parliament ............................................. 16

   2.2.4. The European Council .................................................. 17

   2.2.5. The Council ..................................................................... 17

   2.2.6. The European Commission .......................................... 18

   2.2.7. The European External Action Service ......................... 18

   2.2.8. The Court of Justice of the European Union ............... 20

   2.2.9. The Committee of the Regions ...................................... 21

   2.2.10. The European Economic and Social Committee ...... 21

   2.3. Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level and National Cooperation between Parliament and the Federal Provinces ..................................................................................... 21

   2.3.1. Internal Policies of the European Union ....................... 24

   2.3.2. The European Union’s External Relations ................. 53

   2.3.3. The Enlargement of the European Union ................. 59
Table of Contents

2.3.4. Macro-Regional Strategies .................................................. 63
2.4. Economic and Financial Issues: European Crisis Management ............................................................................. 65
  2.4.1. Implementation and Strengthening of Economic Governance ............................................................................. 65
  2.4.2. Banking Union .............................................................................. 66
  2.4.3. Strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union ............................................................................. 67
  2.4.4. Financial Assistance for Euro Area Countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus) ............................................. 67
2.5. Information on Europe ........................................................................ 69

3. Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents .................... 70
  3.1. Europe ...................................................................................... 70
      3.1.1. Austria’s Neighbourhood ............................................. 70
      3.1.2. Turkey .......................................................................... 87
      3.1.3. Cyprus .......................................................................... 88
      3.1.4. Russia .......................................................................... 88
      3.1.5. Other Eastern European States ..................................... 90
      3.1.6. Southern Caucasus ....................................................... 93
  3.2. Africa and the African Union .................................................... 95
      3.2.1. General Developments ................................................. 95
      3.2.2. Developments in the Regions ....................................... 96
      3.2.3. Regional Integration Issues .......................................... 112
  3.3. America ................................................................................... 113
      3.3.1. USA ............................................................................. 113
      3.3.2. Canada ........................................................................ 117
      3.3.3. Latin America and the Caribbean .................................. 119
  3.4. Asia .......................................................................................... 124
      3.4.1. General Developments ................................................. 124
      3.4.2. Developments in the Regions ....................................... 127
      3.4.3. Regional Organisations ................................................. 140
  3.5. Australia and Oceania ............................................................. 140
      3.5.1. Australia ..................................................................... 140
      3.5.2. New Zealand .................................................................. 141
      3.5.3. Oceania ....................................................................... 141

4. Security Policy Dimension ............................................................. 142
  4.1. Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) .......................... 142
      4.1.1. CSDP Operations and Missions .................................... 145
  4.2. OSCE .......................................................................................... 146
Table of Contents

4.2.1. The OSCE’s Evolution towards a comprehensive Security Community .................................................. 146
4.2.2. Regional Issues and Field Activities .......................... 146
4.2.3. Election Observation .................................................. 150
4.2.4. The OSCE’s Human Dimension .................................................. 150
4.2.5. The OSCE’s Security Policy Dimension .................... 152
4.2.6. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension................................................................... 153
4.2.7. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly .................................................. 153
4.3. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).......................... 154
4.3.1. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP)......................... 154

5. Austria in other European Fora ....................................................... 156
5.1. Council of Europe ................................................................... 156
5.1.1. The Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers 2013/2014................................................... 156
5.1.2. Most important Political Developments .................... 157
5.1.3. Relations with other International Organisations .......................... 158
5.1.4. Human Rights........................................................................... 159
5.1.5. Monitoring Respect of Commitments by Member States................................................................... 160
5.1.6. Assistance Programmes.............................................. 161
5.1.7. The Organs of the Council of Europe ........................... 162
5.1.8. The Council of Europe and Austria ........................... 163
5.2. Central European Initiative ..................................................... 164
5.3. Alpine Convention .................................................................. 164
5.4. Danube Commission ............................................................... 165

6. The United Nations and its Specialised Agencies ........................... 166
6.1. Introduction............................................................................. 166
6.2. The General Assembly ............................................................ 166
6.2.1. Procedural Matters ..................................................... 166
6.2.2. Political Affairs ........................................................... 168
6.2.3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs 169
6.2.4. Human Rights ............................................................... 170
6.2.5. International Drug Control ......................................... 170
6.2.6. International Crime Prevention ........................................ 171
6.2.7. Social Policy ............................................................... 172
6.2.8. International Women’s Affairs ................................... 172
6.2.9. Humanitarian Affairs .................................................. 173
# Table of Contents

6.2.10. Peaceful Use of Outer Space ................................................................. 173  
6.2.11. Administrative and Budgetary Affairs ............................................. 173  
6.2.12. UN Procurement .................................................................................. 174  
6.2.13. International Law .................................................................................. 174  
6.3. The United Nations Security Council ...................................................... 177  
6.3.1. Cross-sectional Issues ........................................................................... 177  
6.3.2. Peacekeeping Operations .................................................................... 180  
6.3.3. Country-specific and Regional Issues ................................................. 182  
6.4. The UN Peacebuilding Commission ........................................................... 182  
6.5. The Economic and Social Council ............................................................ 183  
6.5.1. General Part ......................................................................................... 183  
6.5.2. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) .................. 183  
6.6. The International Court of Justice ............................................................. 184  
6.7. The United Nations Specialised Agencies ................................................. 185  
6.7.1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) ............ 185  
6.7.2. International Labour Organisation (ILO) ........................................... 185  
6.7.3. International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ................................ 186  
6.7.4. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) .......... 186  
6.7.5. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) ................................ 187  
6.7.6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) ................................................................. 187  
6.7.7. World Health Organization (WHO) .................................................... 189  
6.7.8. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) .................................... 190  
6.7.9. Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) ................................................................. 191  
6.7.10. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) ........ 191  
6.7.11. World Meteorological Organization (WMO) .................................... 191  
6.7.12. International Maritime Organisation (IMO) ...................................... 192  
6.7.13. Excursus: The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) ........... 192  

7. Austria as the Seat of International Organisations and Institutions .................. 194  

8. The International Protection of Human Rights .............................................. 197  
8.1. Introduction ............................................................................................. 197  
8.2. Human Rights in the United Nations ....................................................... 198
Table of Contents

8.2.1. Human Rights Council ............................................... 198
8.2.2. General Assembly ....................................................... 201
8.2.3. Commission on the Status of Women ........................ 202
8.3. Human Rights in the European Union ............................. 203
  8.3.1. The European Union Human Rights Policy .............. 203
  8.3.2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues ......................... 205
8.4. Human Rights in the Council of Europe ......................... 206
8.5. Human Rights in the OSCE ..................................................... 207
8.6. Austrian Priorities in the Field of Human Rights ............... 207
  8.6.1. Freedom of Religion and Protection of Religious
          Minorities ................................................................... 207
  8.6.2. Human Rights of Children ........................................... 208
  8.6.3. Human Rights of Women ........................................... 210
  8.6.4. Freedom of the Media and Protection of Journalists 211
  8.6.5. Protection of Minorities ............................................. 213
  8.6.6. Human Rights Education ........................................... 214
  8.6.7. International Humanitarian Law ............................... 215
  8.6.8. Combating Human Trafficking ................................... 215
8.7. The International Criminal Court ........................................... 217

9. Humanitarian Affairs ................................................................. 220
  9.1. Austrian Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief ............ 220
    9.1.1. Bilateral Humanitarian Aid ....................................... 220
    9.1.2. Multilateral Humanitarian Aid .................................. 221
    9.2.1. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 222
    9.2.2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees ........................................... 222
    9.2.3. United Nations World Food Programme ................... 222
    9.2.4. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East ............... 223
    9.2.5. The United Nation’s Central Emergency Response Fund .......................................................... 223
  9.3. Humanitarian Aid in the European Union Context ............ 223
  9.4. International Humanitarian Law ............................................. 223

10. Multilateral Economic Policy ..................................................... 225
  10.1. World Trade Organisation (WTO) ................................. 225
  10.2. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) ............................................... 226
    10.2.1. Developments and General Trends ............................ 226
Table of Contents

10.2.2. Economic and Financial Policy ........................................ 226
10.2.3. International Tax Policy .................................................. 227
10.2.4. Trade and Investment ..................................................... 227
10.2.5. Education and Skills ....................................................... 228
10.2.6. Social Affairs, Migration, Consumer Protection ............... 228
10.2.7. Corporate Social Responsibility ...................................... 228
10.2.8. Environment and Agriculture ....................................... 229
10.2.9. Global Relations .............................................................. 229
10.2.10. Statistics/Measuring Well-Being .................................. 230
10.3. International Energy Agency (IEA) ........................................ 230
10.4. International Financial Institutions ........................................ 230
10.4.1. International Monetary Fund (IMF) ............................... 230
10.4.2. Multilateral Development Banks ................................. 231

11.1. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Weapons of Mass Destruction ................................................................. 234
11.1.1. Initiatives for the Worldwide Elimination of Nuclear Weapons .................................................................................. 234
11.1.2. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ........................ ................................................................. 234
11.1.3. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ....................... 234
11.1.4. Geneva Conference on Disarmament ................................ 235
11.1.5. Chemical Weapons Convention ...................................... 235
11.1.6. Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention ...................... 236
11.1.7. Ballistic Missiles .............................................................. 236
11.2. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Conventional Weapons ........................................................................ 237
11.2.1. Latest Developments in Arms Technology ......................... 237
11.3. Export Control Regime ......................................................... 239
11.3.1. Multilateral Export Control .............................................. 239
11.3.2. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) ............................................... 239
11.3.3. National Export Control .................................................. 240

12. Austrian Development Cooperation ........................................... 241
12.1. Introduction ........................................................................ 241
12.1.1. Thematic Priorities ......................................................... 241
12.1.2. Policy Coherence ............................................................. 244
12.1.3. Budget for Development Cooperation .............................. 244
12.1.4. Evaluation ................................................................. 245

XII
Table of Contents

12.2. Bilateral Development Cooperation ............................................... 245
  12.2.1. Geographic Priorities.......................................................... 245
  12.2.2. NGO Co-financing ............................................................. 251
12.3. Multilateral Development Cooperation ........................................ 252
  12.3.1. The European Union .......................................................... 252
  12.3.2. The United Nations ............................................................ 254
  12.3.3. OECD/DAC ................................................................. 256
  12.3.4. Assignments of Young Austrians ....................................... 257

13. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy ............................... 258
  13.1. Sustainable Development in the United Nations (Rio+20) ... 258
  13.2. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)....... 258
  13.3. Global Environmental Protection Agreements ....................... 259
  13.4. Sustainable Energy for All .................................................... 261
  13.5. Nuclear Safety ...................................................................... 262

  14.1. Objectives and Priorities ......................................................... 264
  14.2. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science .. 271
  14.3. Austria Libraries .................................................................... 273
    14.4.1. Austria Professorships and Centres of Austrian Studies Abroad .................................................... 276
    14.4.2. Scholarships and Mobility Programmes in the University Field ................................................. 276
    14.4.3. Offices of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA). .......................................................... 276
    14.4.4. Language ..................................................................... 277
    14.4.5. Educational Networks and Austrian Schools Abroad ............................................................ 278
  14.5. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation ............... 278
  14.7. Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue ............................... 280
  14.8. International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and Issues related to the National Socialist Past ........................................... 282

15. Media and Information ..................................................................... 284
  15.1. Press Work ............................................................................... 284
  15.2. PR, New Media and Web Presence ........................................... 284
  15.3. Information about Europe: “DARUM EUROPA” Information Roadshow .................................................... 285

XIII
15.4. The “Municipal Councillors for European Affairs” ..............  286
15.5. Publications .............................................................................  287
15.6. Press Officers’ Meeting ............................................................  287

16. The Austrian Foreign Service ...........................................................  288
  16.1. Introduction .............................................................................  288
  16.2. Working at the FMEIA ............................................................  289
  16.3. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget ...............................................  291
  16.4. Worldwide Infrastructure .......................................................  292
      16.4.1. Real Estate Management and Construction Projects. 292
      16.4.2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT). 292
  16.5. Austrian Representations Abroad and Honorary Consulates  293
  16.6. Organisational Chart ...............................................................  294
  16.7. The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna ......................................  296

17. Selected Documents...........................................................................  298
  17.1. Opening Remarks by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the European Regional
       Workshop on Reclaiming the Protection of Civilians under
       International Humanitarian Law
       Vienna, 21 February 2013..............................................................  298
  17.2. Opening Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the 5th United Nations Alliance
       of Civilisations (UNAOC) Global Forum
       Vienna, Hofburg, 27 February 2013...........................................  301
  17.3. Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Europe Day matinee
       Vienna, Diplomatic Academy, 7 May 2013.............................  303
  17.4. Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the event commemorating the
       liberation from National Socialism and the end of the
       Second World War in Europe “Fest der Freude”
       Vienna, Heldenplatz, 8 May 2013 ................................................  306
  17.5. Opening address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the International Expert
       Conference Vienna+20: Advancing the Protection of Human
       Rights
       Vienna, Hofburg, 27 June 2013...................................................  309
  17.6. Statement by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister
       Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Ministerial Segment of the Inter-
       national IAEA Conference on Nuclear Security: 

XIV
Table of Contents

Enhancing Global Efforts
Vienna International Centre, 1 July 2013 ............................... 312

17.7. Statement by Federal President Dr. Heinz Fischer at the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
New York, 24 September 2013 ............................................... 314

17.8. Statement by State Secretary Dr. Reinhold Lopatka at the Croatia Forum on European Energy Security
Dubrovnik, 4 October 2013 ..................................................... 318

Index .......................................................................................... 321
1. Worldwide at Your Service – Services provided by the FMEIA to Austrians abroad

1.1. Worldwide at Your Service: Services the FMEIA provided worldwide to Austrians abroad in 2013

1.1.1. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management

Austrian citizens and their interests were affected by a number of critical developments abroad, which required protective measures to be taken at both consular and organisational level. In the course of the year events like the civil war in Syria and its impact on neighbouring states, a kidnapping by a terrorist group in Yemen that lasted five months, bloody attacks in Algeria and Kenya, the conflicts in Egypt, the typhoon in the Philippines, tensions in Thailand, in the Maldives, in the Ukraine and on the Korean peninsula as well as the conflict-ridden security situation in South Sudan, in Central Africa and Libya, clearly indicated the importance of comprehensive and integrated crisis management for the FMEIA and the Austrian representations abroad. Fortunately, no Austrian nationals died or were seriously injured as a result of these crises.

Preventive measures are an important pillar of crisis management. Therefore technical and organisational safety precautions – such as crisis prevention planning – which are in place for all representations abroad, are thus subject to ongoing evaluation. Further activities include crisis training seminars for staff at the FMEIA as well as crisis exercises held both at headquarters and in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and the Federal Ministry of the Interior as well as in the EU context (in Beijing and in Beirut). Another focus is optimisation of technical means and opportunities for crisis response, for instance in the crisis areas and also with respect to a standardised crises data base. In this context, the newly introduced opportunity of electronic travel registration proved highly relevant. As a result of the deteriorating safety and security situation in many service locations, efforts towards enhancing the protection, safety and security of embassy premises were continued.

Precautions taken to deal with critical developments abroad also include institutionalised cooperation between the FMEIA, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports under the leadership of the FMEIA. An important element of such crisis prevention planning is the dispatch of crisis support teams, which conducted exploratory missions to Iran and Thailand under the overall leadership of the FMEIA. Operational missions were undertaken in connection with a kidnapping case in Yemen and the crisis in Egypt. There is also a regular exchange of information in place between the FMEIA and the Austrian tourism sector.

In the EU context, there was regular exchange of information regarding operational consular matters and coordination of relevant measures with the EU
Member States and also with Switzerland and Norway. Consular protection remains a national responsibility. In connection with consular crisis management, however, the EU has taken a number of relevant decisions: upon request of EU Member States, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism may be applied to provide consular assistance in connection with disasters in third countries. Besides, the role of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in supporting Member States when managing crisis-relevant consular activities is to be reviewed. Furthermore, agreement was reached on an Integrated Political Crisis Response Mechanism (IPCR, previously CCA). The respective role to be played by the EU was discussed in connection with the implementation of the IPCR, the Solidarity Clause, and the ongoing cooperation between EU Member States and EEAS in the consular field.

The pluri-national efforts undertaken by the Non-Combatant Evacuation Group (NCG) specialised in evacuations in crisis situations were discussed in planning meetings held in Vienna and Brussels.

1.2. General Consular and Legal Issues

The growing volume of foreign travel undertaken by Austrian nationals is also reflected in the increasing use made of consular support in cases of sickness, accidents or deaths abroad, including the number of cases involving the provision of support for Austrian citizens in a foreign country suffering mental health problems or the repatriation of such individuals from abroad as well as of Austrian nationals without health coverage abroad.

Cooperation among EU Member States and mutual exchange of information at consular level were continued. Consultations on the European Commission’s proposal regarding a Council Directive on Consular Protection for Citizens of the Union Abroad were further pursued.

1.2.1. Citizens’ Desk

In close cooperation with the Austrian representations abroad, the FMEIA’s Citizens’ Desk provides timely, immediate and high-quality assistance to Austrian citizens both in routine and in emergency situations abroad.

In 2013, Austrians made approximately 8.53 million holiday trips and 2.13 million business trips abroad (source: Statistics Austria). The Citizens’ Desk provides safety-oriented information on travel destinations on the FMEIA website, on the telephone and in writing, via a smartphone application and on social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

The advice and information made available by the Citizens’ Desk is constantly updated in close cooperation with the Austrian representations abroad and the EU Member States. In the course of the year, the travel information provided on the FMEIA website (www.aussenministerium.at) was
accessed more than 1.8 million times. In total, the Citizens’ Desk section of the website including the Q&A section on travel information, Austrian representations abroad and passport as well as visa issues registered 3.37 million accesses. At peak times, more than 2,000 callers a month dialled the Citizens’ Desk number 0 50 11 50–3775 to seek travel information or general information for instance on the granting of visas, the procurement of documents from abroad, certifications and official procedures. In total, 15,558 such calls were answered by FMEIA staff in the course of the year.

The Citizens’ Desk is at the same time a central pillar in the context of consular support. It provides concrete assistance in emergency situations both to individuals and in major crises that require consular assistance and support. In the event of consular emergencies abroad, FMEIA staff can be reached around the clock by email at buergerservice@bmeia.gv.at and by phone on 0 50 11 50–4411. In total, another 12,896 callers – at peak times more than 1,600 callers per month – dialled this number in 2013 to seek and receive assistance from FMEIA staff.

Apostilles, certifications, and authentications of Austrian documents enable the international recognition of documents and are highly relevant for citizens and companies when engaging in professional activities abroad. In 2013, the Office for Consular Authentications for the first time dealt with more than 20,000 such certificates and authentications.

1.2.2. Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters

The Austrian representations offered legal assistance in a total of 747 cases worldwide. Representations may, however, not directly interfere with pending proceedings, nor are they authorised to legally represent Austrian nationals. On top of the cases above, a further 7,405 requests for mutual administrative and judicial assistance by Austrian authorities were handled over the course of the year.

At the end of the year, a total of 192 Austrian nationals were being detained in prisons abroad¹, in total there were 213 new cases of imprisonment involving Austrian nationals abroad, most of them in Europe.

At regular intervals, representations ascertain that Austrian prison inmates are being treated in line with the relevant national regulations, that such regulations comply with international minimum standards and that Austrian inmates also enjoy all the relief that they may be entitled to under the existing provisions. In this context, representations paid 330 visits to prison inmates. Another important element of the services provided is the acceptance and forwarding of packages and small sums of money (inmate deposit) to Austrian prison inmates abroad.

¹ Statistics include only individuals who are reported to and/or have contacted Austrian representations.
The FMEIA’s scope of responsibility also includes inter-ministerial coor -
dination and chairing of negotiations on readmission, police cooperation,
extradition and service of process agreements. In the reporting period, work
was carried out on 12 such agreements.

In cases of child abduction, direct cooperation between national central
authorities (i.e. ministries of justice) is provided for under the Hague Con-
vention on Child Abduction (HCCA). In all cases, especially in countries
that are not party to the HCCA, the FMEIA and the Austrian representations
support the affected parent in asserting their rights abroad.

The Hague Adoption Convention (HAC) regulates the adoption processes
between countries that are parties to the convention. In Austria, each fed-
eral province has a central authority operating in line with HAC provisions,
which cooperates closely with the FMEIA and the Federal Ministry of Justice.
Adoptions from countries that are not party to the HAC are in principle
possible for Austrians wishing to adopt a child, but do involve substantial
administrative efforts. There is ongoing exchange of information between
the Austrian representations and the competent specialist department at the
FMEIA, which keeps the former updated on the applicable legal require-
ments in connection with the examination of adoption documents. The fight
against human trafficking and child trafficking enjoys top priority in this
context.

1.3. Tourist and Cross-border Traffic

1.3.1. Visas

As of 31 December 2013, Austrian nationals holding a regular passport were
free to enter 106 states without a visa, including all neighbouring states,
Japan, the United Arab Emirates, the USA, many states in Africa, almost all
states in South America, and since 10 January 2013 also Armenia. Austrians
may enter 40 states with an identification card and 18 with a passport that
has expired within the last five years. Nationals of 125 states need a visa to
travel to Austria.

Visas for Austria were issued at 87 Austrian embassies and consulates. Schengen visas for entering Austria were issued at 95 further locations by
representation authorities of states that Austria holds Schengen Representa-
tion Agreements with. In turn, Austria – having 78 Schengen representations
for 14 states – issued visas at 40 service locations.

The Schengen Representation Agreements between Austria and Switzerland
and between Austria and Liechtenstein respectively, entered into force on 6
February and on 1 March. At its service locations in Zagreb, Sofia, Tirana,
Dublin and Kuala Lumpur, Austria represents both countries while at its
locations in Nicosia and Skopje it only represents Switzerland.
The visa facilitation agreements between the EU and Moldova and between the EU and the Ukraine, which enable holders of diplomatic and service passports to enter the EU Member States’ sovereign territory without a visa, entered into force on 1 July.

The Austrian representation authorities processed 339,000 visas – a further increase of approximately 4 per cent over the previous year. The highest increases were registered in the Middle East and East Asia.

In the course of the year, the EU-wide roll-out of the Visa Information System (VIS) was completed for the representation authorities in Central and South East Asia, South Africa and South America. A further roll-out is planned for the next two years and will cover the representations in South and East Asia, North America, Australia and Europe.

As has been the case in previous years, the FMEIA and the Federal Ministry of the Interior organised joint visa workshops on 24 June and on 1 and 2 July. At these workshops, consular staff were provided with the opportunity to share and exchange experience and best practices in order to further improve the protection of visa administration against improper use.

Activities carried out by the joint training and inspection team, composed of members of the FMEIA and the Ministry of Justice, were further intensified at Austrian representations abroad and at headquarters. Inspections included joint checks performed in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior in states with particularly high migration rates.

Close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior on the analysis of developments in numbers of visas, ongoing joint training activities in the consular sector and evaluation of visa administration at the representation authorities, including the implementation of relevant measures, was also continued and intensified.

Continued close and successful cooperation with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber in the form of a round table with representatives from the tourism industry contributed to managing the growing number of visas that was mainly attributable to increasing tourism especially from countries requiring a visa for travel to Austria.

The year also saw intensive preparations for the entry into effect of the Amendment to the Administrative Court Act (Federal Law Gazette I No. 51/2012) on 1 January 2014. By introducing the opportunity of filing a complaint with the newly created Federal Administrative Court, this amendment will also provide for a fundamental reform of visa proceedings. Prior to the application to the Federal Administrative Court, the representative authority against whose decision the complaint is directed may conduct complaints proceedings and take a preliminary decision. Legal remedy against the findings of the Federal Administrative Court may then be sought by way of a revision filed with the Administrative Court, with the latter in future only being able to decide on fundamental legal issues. Preparations for a smooth
transition were made and included the development and/or adaptation of comprehensive tools as well as training seminars for consular staff.

1.4. Austrians abroad

The provision of support and services to Austrian citizens abroad constitutes one of the core tasks of Austrian embassies, consulates and consulates-general. Just like the FMEIA’s dedicated “Austrians abroad” website (www.auslandsoesterreicherInnen.at), the Austrian embassies and representations are an important link between Austrians abroad and their (former) home country. These facilities and the website are the first points of contact and service with regard to passport, citizenship and voting matters, further contact with authorities and consular protection, information about Austria, effective crisis preparedness and coordination, or with respect to facilitating and organising Austria-related events.

As there is no obligation to officially register one’s permanent residence abroad, the figures on Austrians living abroad are largely based on estimates. Verifiable figures do not reflect the actual number of Austrians residing abroad. According to estimates, approximately 530,000 Austrians live abroad. About three quarters reside in Germany (243,000) followed by Switzerland (60,000), the USA (27,000), the United Kingdom (25,000), South Africa (18,000), Australia and Argentina (15,000 each). About 375,000 Austrians abroad are registered at Austrian representations and out of these some 325,000 are entitled to vote. However, in connection with the parliamentary elections in September, the number of Austrians abroad registered in the municipalities’ electoral registers – which is a prerequisite for participating in elections – totalled only 42,387.

Austrians abroad may also register online with Austrian representation authorities. A modern standardised registration system established at Austrian representations worldwide serves to increase the number of Austrians registered abroad and enhance data quality, ensuring quick and efficient contact (by email or text message).

The number of Austrians at heart – who do not or no longer hold Austrian citizenship, but feel a particular attachment to Austria due to their former citizenship, family or business connections, long stays in Austria or for other reasons – can only be estimated and probably comprises several hundred thousand individuals.

1.4.1. Organisations representing Austrians abroad

Ties between Austrians living abroad and their home country are maintained particularly through associations of Austrians abroad and other societies abroad that have a link with Austria and increasingly also via social media.
Austrians abroad

There are 420 such associations and societies in 60 countries, a list of which can be found at the FMEIA’s dedicated website (www.auslandsoesterreicherinnen.at) under “Kontakte” / “Vereinigungen” (contacts/associations).

The Vienna-based Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund (AÖWB), the World Federation of Austrians Abroad, is the umbrella organisation, interest group and service platform for associations of Austrians abroad. Since 1 July 2004, Gustav Chlestil has been the President of the AÖWB and Irmgard Helperstorfer its Secretary-General. The AÖWB maintains a website (www.weltbund.at) and publishes the magazine “ROTWEISSROT”. In 2012, the Federation launched its internet platform at www.austrians.org.

The AÖWB organises annual meetings of Austrians abroad, the most recent of such meetings, which are always held in Austria, took place in Linz from 5 to 8 September. Funding provided by the FMEIA to the AÖWB amounted to 200,000 euros.

Burgenländische Gemeinschaft is the umbrella organisation of all natives of Burgenland who live abroad. It aims to maintain and deepen the ties of all natives of Burgenland worldwide with their home province. This goal is also pursued by its periodical magazine “Die Burgenländische Gemeinschaft” and the social network “Burgenland Bunch” established in 1996. The President of the Burgenländische Gemeinschaft is Walter Dujmovits.

1.4.2. Support for Austrian Citizens abroad

The Fund for the Support of Austrian Citizens Abroad was established in 1967 with a view to assisting Austrians living abroad who find themselves in serious difficulties. The Federal Act on the Fund for Austrians Abroad (Bundesgesetz über den Auslandsösterreicher-Fonds, AÖF-G), Federal Law Gazette I No. 67/2006, which came into force on 1 January 2007, extended the group of potential recipients of support. The fund is financed with a total of 600,000 euros by Austria’s nine federal provinces and the FMEIA, which each contribute 50 per cent. Drawing on existing financial reserves, the fund provided financial assistance totalling 632,000 euro to 1,353 needy Austrians in 67 countries. The Board of Trustees appointed by the Federal Government is chaired by Ambassador (retired) Markus Lutterotti, the office of Managing Director is held by Josef Knapp.

In the course of the Christmas Campaign, organised by the FMEIA every year in support of needy Austrians abroad, donations in cash and in kind totalling 64,130 euros were provided to 537 needy Austrian nationals in 42 countries worldwide.

For Austrians living abroad who are elderly or severely ill and no longer able to care for themselves, the FMEIA can arrange for repatriation including accommodation in a suitable institution in Austria. Prerequisites for such a return to Austria are inter alia that help by relatives or local relief organisa-
tions is impossible, the individuals’ state of health allows them to travel and they agree to medical repatriation. In the course of the year, nine Austrians were thus repatriated from seven countries – Ethiopia, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Spain and Uganda – and placed with Austrian social welfare and/or care institutions.

1.4.3. Participation by Austrians abroad in Political Decision Making in Austria and the European Union

Since 1990, Austrians who are entered in the (European) electoral register and are either residing in other countries or temporarily staying abroad on election days, have had the right to vote in Austrian parliamentary and presidential elections and to participate in nationwide plebiscites and referenda. Austrians abroad – as well as 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 (EP).

**Voting rights of Austrians abroad** – that were simplified substantially as of 1 July 2007 – enable participation in elections from the age of 16. Postal voting is possible in Austria and abroad for anyone unable to cast their vote in a polling station on election day. A signed affidavit is now sufficient for casting a postal vote. Postal charges due for sending absentee ballots by normal mail from all parts of the world back to Austria are borne by the Republic of Austria. Furthermore, Austrians abroad can order absentee ballots in advance for a period of ten years (“absentee ballot subscription”) and will automatically receive their absentee ballots for all nationwide elections, referenda and plebiscites during this period. The municipality in which they are registered as voters informs them ex officio about forthcoming elections, plebiscites and referenda and also when they are about to be deleted from the electoral register.

Under Austrian Federal Constitutional Law, the Austrian federal provinces also have the right to give Austrians living abroad the opportunity to vote in the regional parliamentary elections in their former federal province of residence. So far, the provinces of Lower Austria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg have implemented this type of voting right.

The **range of services provided to Austrians abroad** is constantly being extended. The latest improvements and adaptations to current needs have related to election law, online registration and information provided on the internet.

This mainly concerned facilitated participation in elections from abroad by simplifications in the area of postal voting introduced by the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2009 and extended in 2010. At the referendum of 20 January and the parliamentary election of 29 September, witnesses were thus no longer required nor was it necessary to indicate the place and the time of
Austrians abroad

the affidavit on the voting card. Confidentiality of personal data was ensured by the new design of the voting card. In the context of the 2013 parliamentary election it was for the first time possible to prepare statistics on the number of Austrians abroad who are entered in the electoral registers and participated in the elections. In line with these statistics, their turnout totalled 23,278 (i.e. 68.4 % of the voting cards issued).

All Austrians registered with the Austrian representation authorities abroad were informed individually in writing about the parliamentary election and the nation-wide referendum on the topic of “professional army or compulsory military service”. As was the case on previous occasions, an election office was established at the FMEIA where staff provided information and advice via a telephone hotline to Austrians abroad and answered relevant emails. A specifically established election and voter information website (www.wahlinfo.aussenministerium.at) provided detailed information on voting rights of Austrians abroad including all required forms.

Acting in collaboration with Austrian authorities, ministries, competence centres and scientists, the FMEIA promotes information and communication technology (ICT) applications for Austrians abroad, especially with regard to eGovernment and broader citizen participation. Increased use is also being made of new forms of communication (social media).
2. Austria in the European Union

2.1. Introduction

The efforts towards sustainably safeguarding the Economic and Monetary Union and towards promoting growth and employment were continued. The Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (TSCG or “Fiscal Compact”) came into force as planned on 1 January 2013 and was implemented within 12 months of its entry into force. In addition to the steps towards reform taken thus far – Fiscal Compact, European Stability Mechanism and reform of the economic policy governance framework based on the “six-pack” – the “two-pack”, which supplements these reforms and is aimed at intensified budgetary monitoring and surveillance of Monetary Union Member States as well as tighter monitoring and surveillance of Monetary Union Member States with financial problems, entered into effect on 30 May (see Chapter 2.4.2.). Other important measures relate to the establishment of a European Banking Union and its core element, the Single Supervisory Mechanism (see Chapter 2.4.2.). In addition to these measures, recent decisive action taken by the European Central Bank has contributed substantially to stabilising the Economic and Monetary Union. In the context of the efforts launched towards strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union, further new coordination mechanisms are being considered for the EU Member States. The year 2013 also saw the gradual implementation of the Compact for Growth and Jobs and measures to counter youth unemployment (EU Youth Guarantee and the EU Youth Employment Initiative). For Austria as one of the Member States with the lowest youth unemployment rates, the topic of youth employment is a central concern at EU level. Other important activities towards promoting growth and employment launched within the EU were directed at developing and deepening the single market and at providing financial assistance for small and medium sized companies.

Alongside crisis management, activities also focused on further developing the European Union (EU) with a view to enabling the Union to tackle both existing and future challenges while safeguarding Europe’s stability, prosperity and weight in the world. Following the accession of Croatia as 28th Member State on 1 July, the EU now has almost 507 million citizens, which is a little more than seven per cent of the global population. With a share of about 20 per cent in the global gross national product and an equally large share in global external trade with third countries, Europe continues to be a leading economic region. Yet, it is necessary to focus on safeguarding the interests of European businesses amid global competition and on preserving the successful European social model and the European way of life in the long term. By adopting the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020, the Union took important decisions regarding the future development of Europe and – in spite of necessary cuts – funding increases were ensured for future-oriented
areas like research and innovation. In order to safeguard Europe’s position as a business location in the face of global competition also in the future, new priorities are being set in the fields of infrastructure, climate policy, education, research and innovation.

Other central themes that were a focus of activities throughout 2013 related to the role of citizens at European level and their involvement in the EU’s decision making processes. Further important steps towards integration must be supported by citizens. Optimised tools to enhance the democratic legitimacy of decision-making at EU level were a central demand made by the Ministers for European Affairs at their informal meeting on 20 January in Dublin. One of the demands adopted by the European Council (EC) of 27 and 28 June was that concrete new steps towards strengthening economic governance be taken and implemented. At this meeting, the President of the European Council Van Rompuy also took interim stock of the work undertaken towards deepening the Economic and Monetary Union based on the report “Towards a Genuine Economic and Monetary Union”, published in December 2012.

The promotion of democratic participation at EU level was also an essential goal of the “European Year of Citizens”. Ways and means towards facilitating Union citizens the exercise of their rights and promoting citizens’ participation at European level were addressed by numerous information events and activities (see Chapter 2.1.1). With respect to the 2014 European elections (see also Chapter 2.2.3.), a Council debate chaired by Lithuania was held in the context of the Informal General Affairs Council on 29 and 30 August in Vilnius. The debate, which focused on opportunities for promoting citizens’ participation at European level and raising awareness for the importance of European elections, was also attended by representatives of the European Parliament (EP). Discussions dealt with the recommendations on enhancing the democratic and efficient conduct of the European Parliament elections, adopted by the European Commission (EC) on 12 March. Responsibility for implementing these recommendations, aimed at facilitating an EU-wide debate in the course of the election campaign, lies mainly with the EU Member States and the European and national parties. The Commission suggested, for example, that European elections be held on the same day across the EU, that the European political parties nominate their candidates for the function of the President of the European Commission and that the affiliation between the national and the European parties is made known in the election campaign and is also indicated on the ballots.

On 4 July, the EP adopted a resolution in which it issued recommendations to both EU Member States and political parties on improving the practical arrangements for the holding of the forthcoming European elections. In the context of its Conclusions on the European Commission’s EU Citizenship Report 2013, the Council also commented on the Commission’s recommendations on improving the electoral procedure. With respect to the European
Austria in the European Union

elections in May 2014, the Council also underlined the importance of measures towards increasing the visibility of the EP elections through a pan-European debate. Council and EP are also working towards developing common standards and enhancing the opportunities at European level for European parties and foundations based on a new statute.

The question on how the project of Europe could be filled with new enthusiasm was analysed under the initiative “A new narrative for Europe” launched by the President of the Commission José Manuel Barroso on 23 April. Initial debates were held at events organised by the Commission in Warsaw and Milan. European citizens and especially artists and intellectuals were encouraged to generate ideas on further developing the post-war theme of “peace through a common market”, which has indeed been in place for a long time, and updating it in the light of new challenges.

Another opportunity for democratic participation at EU level – apart from the EP elections – is the European Citizens’ Initiative. In the course of the year, seven new citizens’ initiatives were registered following examination by the Commission. By the end of the year, three of the citizens’ initiatives launched in 2012 had not only gathered the required minimum support of one million signatures from EU citizens but had also achieved the necessary minimum quorum in seven EU Member States, and were thus successfully closed. The first citizens’ initiative to achieve such successful closing is “Water and sanitation are a human right”, which was submitted to the Commission on 20 December following examination of the signatures by the authorities of the EU Member States. The other initiatives are “One of us”, which aims at protecting unborn life and calls for putting a halt to EU funding of research with embryonic stem cells, and the initiative “Stop vivisection/Stop animal experiments”, which was the only one of the three initiatives not to succeed in collecting the necessary minimum quorum of 14,250 signatures in Austria.

In the context of the efforts towards optimising tools to enhance the democratic legitimacy of decision-making at EU level, the existing interplay of parliamentary levels and decision-making mechanisms in Europe was also discussed. Based on a subsidiarity review performed by the Dutch government and presented at the General Affairs Council on 19 November, many Member States advocated an open debate on a sharper focus of EU initiatives on subsidiarity and proportionality principles. The formal discussion on this topic is scheduled for the General Affairs Council in March 2014. In the context of the subsidiarity review procedure, the Member States’ national parliaments adopted a total of 89 reasoned opinions on legislative initiatives by the EU in 2013 (compared with 70 reasoned initiatives in 2012).

In the context of a subsidiarity review by national parliaments, a renewed review of the Proposal for a Regulation on Setting-up the European Public Prosecutor’s Office to prosecute offences affecting the EU’s financial interests, which had been submitted by the Commission on 17 June was performed
due to subsidiarity concerns raised by the parliaments of 11 EU Member States (not by Austria). The proposal for a regulation provides for setting up a European Public Prosecutor's Office headed by a European Public Prosecutor. This subsidiarity complaint was the second “yellow card” triggered so far as a result of a subsidiarity review by national parliaments. The Commission decided to maintain the draft regulation in its current form, but assured Member States that the concerns raised will be taken account of in the legislative procedure.

Austria contributed actively to Council discussions on opportunities for improved review of the respect of rule of law principles and the Member States’ fundamental values, especially in the field of the judiciary (“rule of law initiative“).

2.1.1. European Year of Citizens 2013

Since 1983, the EU has designated “European Years”. By launching awareness raising and information campaigns, the EU thus strives to add visibility to topics that are important to EU citizens, discuss these topics with citizens and make them more accessible for the public at large. The topic thus addressed in 2013 was citizenship of the European Union, which was introduced by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993. Events, conferences and seminars organised at Union level, in the individual Member States, in regions and communities thus dealt with the added value, the benefit and the rights arising from citizenship of the European Union.

The EU Citizenship Report presented by the Commission on 8 May contributed substantially to the relevant efforts. Based on the results and findings of a comprehensive public consultation process, it proposes a number of concrete actions to help EU citizens make better use of their rights in other EU Member States. One objective defined for the Year of Citizens was thus the facilitation of a debate on the obstacles faced by citizens when striving to exercise their rights in their home country or another EU Member State. The other goal pursued by this European Year was the promotion of citizens’ participation in democratic life in the EU and raising awareness of the EU programmes particularly targeted at young people.

All federal ministries, federal provinces, cities and communities were called upon to draw citizens’ attention to the topic of EU citizenship by launching, for instance, information initiatives and organising awareness raising events. Relevant news, information, announcements and upcoming events were published across the EU on a special website dedicated to the European Year of Citizens and maintained by the European Commission. In Austria, some 70 events – ranging from educational events, academic meetings and international conferences to school, citizens’ dialogue and Europe Day events – provided the opportunity to address the advantages and benefits of Union citizenship and discuss the rights arising from it with citizens.
In cooperation with representatives from the Commission and the Europe Direct regional offices, the FMEIA published the information brochure “SIE HABEN RECHT” (You Are Right) which explains Union citizenship rights in a clear and practical manner. The brochure was received with interest at school and information events organised in all federal provinces. In the context of the European Year of Citizens, the FMEIA also attached importance to increasingly reaching out beyond Austria’s borders and informing Austrians living abroad worldwide about Union citizenship and their democratic cooperation rights at EU level.

The objectives pursued by the European Year of Citizens 2013 included promoting EU citizens’ active participation in the EU’s political decision-making processes, also with a view to the EP elections in 2014. As Austria is the only EU Member State in which the voting age has been reduced to 16 years, numerous information initiatives were launched across Austria – in particular to inform young and first-time voters about the opportunities for democratic participation at EU level.

At the final conference on the European Year of Citizens held in Vilnius on 13 December, the European Year of the Citizens Alliance EYCA, launched by Commission Vice President Viviane Reding and composed of civil society organisations from all EU Member States, presented a catalogue of concrete proposals for measures that make it easier for Europe’s citizens to exercise their Union citizenship rights. In the Council Conclusions on the 2013 Union Citizenship Report adopted on 6 December, the EU Member States also underlined their commitment to the importance of Union citizenship rights and all measures that support Union citizens in exercising their rights.

2.2. Austria in the Institutions of the European Union

Austria is actively involved in shaping and further developing the EU. By focusing its best efforts and making full use of its opportunities, Austria strives to influence and co-determine developments – be it by way of having its say on the European Council, the Council and its preparatory bodies or by way of the directly elected Austrian Members of the European Parliament and Austrian representatives in other institutions. The Federal Government attaches great importance to the process of defining and agreeing on the respective Austrian position. It does so by making full use of all the consultation obligations and opportunities that are provided under the Federal Constitution, in particular with regard to the Austrian Parliament, the federal provinces and municipalities, special interest groups and representations as well as the general public.
2.2.1. The Permanent Representation of Austria to the European Union

Austria's direct point of contact to the institutions of the Union, the Council Presidency and other Member States is the Permanent Representation of Austria to the European Union in which all federal ministries, the Liaison Office of the Federal Provinces well as social partners and interest groups are represented. The Permanent Representation’s central task is cooperating and providing active contributions to the political and legislative decisions that are prepared by the Council Working Groups and relevant committees in some 4,500 meetings per year. Furthermore, the Permanent Representation’s staff also strives to gather the latest information and keep updated on the current state of affairs in the various policy areas and seeks to represent Austria’s interests as early as possible in all phases of decision-making and legislative processes.

Besides, the Permanent Representation supports the Austrian media’s EU correspondents in Brussels and updates them on current activities. It also assists Austrians wishing to apply for jobs with EU institutions, especially by providing information about jobs and vacancies that are advertised by the Commission and individual assistance to applicants, including support in selection procedures.

Interested citizens also have the opportunity to take a look behind the scenes of the Permanent Representation and the European institutions. In 2013, the Permanent Representation’s Visitor Service thus took care of some 126 groups of visitors, totalling around 4,000 individuals.

2.2.2. Austrians in the EU Institutions

Since 10 February 2010, former Federal Minister Johannes Hahn has been active as a member of the EC. In the Commission Barroso II he has been responsible for regional policy, an area to which a substantial part of the Union’s budget is allocated.

Since October 2009, former Federal Minister Maria Berger has been active as a judge at the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxembourg and was reappointed for the period from 7 October 2012 to 6 October 2018. Succeeding the long-standing Austrian representative Josef Azizi, Viktor Kreuschitz took office as Austrian judge at the General Court on 1 September. His term covers the forthcoming period until 31 August 2016.

Since July 2011, former Vice Chancellor Wilhelm Molterer has been Vice-President and Member of the Management Committee of the European Investment Bank (EIB). His mandate expires on 31 August 2015.

Harald Wögerbauer, whose term expires on 31 December 2013, is the Austrian member of the Audit Group I “Preservation and Management of Natural
Resources” at the European Court of Auditors (ECA). As successor Austria nominated the head of the finance and sustainability department at the Austrian Court of Auditors Oskar Herics.

In 2013, a total of 462 Austrians (217 women and 245 men) worked at the EC, making up a share of 1.56% of the EC’s total headcount. A total of 15 Austrians (5 women and 10 men) were employed at the ECJ, representing 0.7% of the Court’s total staff. A total of 74 Austrians (46 women and 28 men) worked in the EP, making up 1.1% of the Parliament’s headcount. The 26 Austrians (9 women and 17 men) working in the Council’s Secretariat-General account for 0.9% of its total staff, 32 Austrians (14 women and 18 men) work at the European Bank of Investment (EBI) and 17 Austrians (9 female and 8 male) are employed at the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

2.2.3. The European Parliament

The European Parliament (EP) has 19 Austrian members. Since January 2012, the Austrian MEP Hannes Swoboda has been President of the Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the EP. Also since January 2012, Austrian MEP Othmar Karas has held the office of Vice-President of the EP.

Croatia’s accession to the EU on 1 July required a redistribution of seats in the EP in order to ensure observance of the cap of 751 seats for the term from 2014 onwards. Based on a proposal by the EP, the European Council on 28 June adopted a resolution on the distribution of seats following the 2014 EP elections. As a consequence, Austria was allocated 18 seats for which candidates may thus compete in the European elections for the term 2014 to 2019.

On 15 January, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann visited the EP. In the presence of EP President Schulz and Commission President Barroso, the Federal Chancellor delivered a keynote address in the plenary, in which he especially highlighted the importance of fighting youth unemployment, the consequences of the financial and economic crisis, the importance of solidarity in Europe and the added value generated by the process of European integration.

From 28 to 30 January, the first “European Parliamentary Week” was held in the EP. The event focused on the Member States’ economic and budget policy coordination in the context of the “European Semester”. The Austrian MEP and Vice-President of the EP, Othmar Karas, opened the event at which members of national parliaments and MEPs exchanged views in several working groups. As representatives of the Austrian Parliament, Bruno Rossmann participated in the event on behalf of the National Council and Monika Mühlwerth on behalf of the Federal Council.

In accordance with the Council decision of 14 June, the dates for the 2014 EP elections were moved to 22–25 May 2014. These are the first EP elec-
tions since the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, which strengthened the powers of the EP substantially – ranging from the extension of the co-decision procedures to almost all of the Union’s policy areas through to the strengthening of its powers of assent in budgetary proceedings and with regard to international treaties. On 10 September, the EP launched an information campaign focusing on the reaction to the crisis (motto: “Act.React. Impact”). It is based on five key topics (economy, jobs, quality of life, money and the EU in the world) highlighting the important role played by the EP in legislative areas that impact citizens’ lives.

2.2.4. The European Council

The European Council, which is composed of the Member States’ Heads of State and Government, the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission, is to “provide the Union with the necessary impetus for its development and define the general political directions and priorities thereof”.

The European Council elects its President by qualified majority for a term of office lasting two and a half years; the President may be re-elected once. Since 1 December 2009 the Belgian Herman Van Rompuy has been the President of the European Council and was re-appointed for a further two and a half years on 1 March 2012 by the European Heads of State and Government. He was simultaneously elected Chairman of the Euro Summit for the same period. Both terms of office expire on 30 November 2014. He represents the EU at international level in matters relating to Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

In 2013, the European Council held six formal meetings. A summit of the Heads of State and Government of the euro area was also held and presided over by the President of the European Council.

2.2.5. The Council

The Council of the EU is composed of the national ministers of the individual Member States. Currently, there are ten different Council formations. The Council adopts, generally together with the EP, legal acts at European level and together with the EP defines the multiannual financial framework and the annual budget of the Union. In contrast to the European Council, the principle of the semi-annually rotating presidency between Members States has been retained. The rotating Council Presidency was thus held by Ireland in the first six months and by Lithuania in the second half of the year. In 2013, a total of 88 Council meetings were convened in Brussels and in Luxembourg.

The presidency of the Foreign Affairs Council is held by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EU HR). A
special role is played by the General Affairs Council, which is composed of the Member States’ foreign and/or European affairs ministers. It coordinates the other Council formations’ activities, prepares European Council meetings and takes decisions of horizontal importance (for instance on enlargement and on the multiannual financial framework).

Following the accession of Croatia on 1 July, a legal act now requires at least 260 (out of a total of 352) votes in favour from at least 15 Member States to be adopted by qualified majority. Croatia has seven votes.

### 2.2.6. The European Commission

As a result of Croatia’s accession to the EU, the European Commission (EC) is now composed of 28 members. As a collegiate body made up of 27 Commissioners and one President of the Commission, the EC ensures the application of EU law under the control of the Court of Justice and exercises essential coordinating, executive and management functions. The Commission executes the Union’s budget and manages programmes in the individual policy areas. Apart from a few exceptions, it has the right of initiative to propose draft legislation. With the exception of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the EC assumes responsibility for the Union’s external representation.

According to Article 17, paragraph 4 of the TEU the Commission consists of one national of each Member State including its President and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. On 22 May, the European Council decided that the Commission shall also consist of one national of each Member State for the term from 1 November 2014 to October 2019. The decision provides for a review of the Commission’s size before the end of the 2019 term of office.

As has been the case in previous years, numerous EU Commissioners visited Austria also in 2013. They participated in and contributed to EU events and panel discussions held across the country. EU Commissioners paid 65 visits to Austria, 42 of which were by EU Regional Policy Commissioner Johannes Hahn. In the course of the year, the President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso paid five visits to Austria. Apart from working visits in January and March during which he inter alia met Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger, President Barroso also participated in the European Forum Alpbach at the end of August. In December, he received the “Center for Global Dialogue and Cooperation” Award 2013 for enhancing dialogue among diverse people.

### 2.2.7. The European External Action Service

The European External Action Service (EEAS) assists the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. It cooperates closely with the EU
Member States’ national diplomatic services and assists the Commission, the European Parliament and the President of the European Council. Compared with its former structures in the Commission and the Council Secretariat, the EEAS was equipped with minimal additional staff although it was assigned an additional task when assuming the presidency function. This approach also ensured that there was no duplication by the EEAS of the activities and tasks performed by the EU Member States’ representations in third countries and within international organisations. The FMEIA cooperates with the EEAS and by way of this collaboration ensures that Austria contributes towards shaping the external action of the EU in general and of the CFSP in particular. There is regular communication between the EEAS and the EU Member States’ foreign ministries at Secretary-General level with regard to further developing the EEAS.

The service is in its third year of operation and the Council Decision establishing the EEAS provided for the presentation of a report by the EU HR by mid-2013. This report is to include proposals for adaptations based on the experience made in the start-up phase with a special focus on staffing policy. Submitted by the EU HR on 26 July, the report, apart from a detailed stock-taking also set out a list of 26 short-term and 9 medium-term recommendations on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS, of which 4 dealt with personnel management aspects. The EU HR discussed the report in detail with the Council and the EP.

In December, the General Affairs Council adopted conclusions on the EEAS review in which it supported the majority of the short-term recommendations. The medium-term recommendations and the chairmanship of preparatory bodies of the Council as well as a further progress report were moved to the next High Representative’s term of office. The Council did not suggest any changes to the legal framework in the current EU HR’s term of office. The Council especially underlined the importance of timely, effective and efficient preparation of Council meetings, based on the work of relevant Council preparatory bodies, the coordination role of the EU HR in the field of external relations within the Commission, and enhanced cooperation between the EU delegations and Member States’ diplomatic representations. The Council suggested that another evaluation on the organisation and functioning of the EEAS be presented by the end of 2015.

The EEAS is composed of civil servants who – prior to its establishment – worked with those services and departments at the Commission and Council Secretariat-General entrusted with foreign relations. The EEAS’ personnel also includes staff working with the Member States’ national diplomatic services, who upon expiry of their temporary contract with the EEAS return to their national diplomatic service. By the target date 1 July, the goal of filling one third of the positions in the EEAS’ establishment plan at all levels by Member States’ diplomatic staff had almost been achieved. Since then, civil
servants working with other EU bodies have also been able to apply for job vacancies advertised by the EEAS.

By the end of the year, 298 members of the EU Member States’ national diplomatic services worked with the EEAS (this is equivalent to 32.4% of all EEAS positions). Of this staff, about 130 (23.5%) work at headquarters and 168 (45.4%) in the delegations. At the end of 2013, the EEAS headcount totalled 3,374 individuals of which 1,498 individuals worked at headquarters in Brussels and 1,876 in the worldwide network of the Union’s around 140 delegations.

To date, eleven Austrian diplomats have successfully completed application processes for temporary positions at senior level in the EEAS and for functions allocated to them. Representatives from Member States were involved in the selection procedures for senior management functions as members of the selection commission. Taking account of all employment groups – including officials from the Commission, the Council Secretariat and staff employed as national delegates – 43 Austrians worked in the EEAS, including the head of the EU delegation to the UN in New York, the head of the EU delegation to Japan, the head of the EU delegation to Peru, the head of the EU delegation to Tajikistan, the chairman of the Council working group on “human rights” and the EU Managing Director for North Africa, the Middle East, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Iran.

2.2.8. The Court of Justice of the European Union

The Republic of Austria is represented before the Court of Justice of the European Union, ECJ, (consisting of the Court and the General Court) by legal counsels from the Constitutional Service of the Federal Chancellery. In 2013, Austrian courts initiated 19 new 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). An action brought before the Court by the European Commission in 2010 for alleged infringements of Union law (concerning the implementation of directives relating to the First Railway package) was rejected by the ECJ. There were no further proceedings pending against Austria.

In order to resolve the problems of backlog and lengthy duration of proceedings at the Court of the EU, which inter alia examines individual complaints as court of first instance, a proposal submitted by the ECJ in 2011 was discussed within the relevant Council bodies. This proposal outlines amendments aimed at raising the number of judges at the Court and measures to enhance the efficiency of proceedings.
2.2.9. **The Committee of the Regions**

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is a consultative body and as such provides a forum for the representation of regional and local interests in connection with European integration. Since the accession of the Republic of Croatia on 1 July the Committee has been composed of 353 (previously: 344) representatives of regional and local authorities from all 28 Member States. The Committee prepares its opinions in a total of six thematic commissions. Austria is represented by twelve members. Each of the nine federal provinces has a seat and the towns, cities and municipalities together have a total of three seats. The CoR is currently in its fifth mandate period, which covers the period from 2010 to 2015. In 2013, the Committee held a total of six plenary sessions.

On 27 November, the Bureau of the CoR unanimously elected the Austrian Andrä Rupprechter as Secretary-General of the Committee of the Regions for the term starting in April 2014. But as Andrä Rupprechter was appointed Federal Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management on 14 December, he will not take up this position.

2.2.10. **The European Economic and Social Committee**

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is a consultative body that involves economic and social interest groups in the EU’s legislative process. Since the accession of the Republic of Croatia, the Economic and Social Committee has been composed of 353 members (previously 344) from all 28 Member States. At an organisational level, the EESC’s members are subdivided into the Workers’ Group, the Employers’ Group and the Various Interests’ Group. Topics are dealt with in six thematic sections. Austria is represented by twelve members – including representatives from the social partners and the Austrian Consumer Protection Association.

2.3. **Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level and National Cooperation between Parliament and the Federal Provinces**

The Treaty of Lisbon and the accompanying amendment adopted subsequently, established new participation rights in matters relating to the EU for the National Council and the Federal Council. The new rights, especially the opportunity to submit reasoned opinions in the context of subsidiarity checks, to present communications in the context of political dialogue with EU institutions and to bring an action before the European Court of Justice on the grounds of infringement of the subsidiarity principle were added to the opportunities for delivering opinions to members of the Federal Government in effect since 1995 under Art. 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act.
Intensive use was made of these new tools in 2013. The EU Committee of the Austrian Federal Council played a particularly active role by submitting reasoned opinions on legislative proposals from the Commission, thus ranking second in an EU-wide comparison of the 39 parliamentary chambers.

In 2013, the Main Committee of the National Council and its Standing Sub-Committee on Matters relating to the EU as well as the plenary and the EU Committee of the Federal Council adopted six opinions under Art. 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act, six communications under Art. 23f par. 4 of the Federal Constitutional Act and six reasoned opinions under Art. 23g par. 1 of the Federal Constitutional Act.

**Reasoned opinions** were adopted by the EU Committee of the Federal Council on the following legislative proposals:

- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the production and making available on the market of plant reproductive material (Federal Council 5 June)
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on animal health (Federal Council 2 July)
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on protective measures against pests of plants (Federal Council 2 July)
- Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council on the prevention and management of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species (Federal Council 8 October)

The **formal communications to institutions of the EU** adopted by the Standing Sub-Committee of the Austrian National Council on Matters relating to the EU and/or the EU Committee of the Federal Council related to the following topics:

- Administrative provisions of the Member States concerning the manufacture, presentation and sale of tobacco and related products (Federal Council 13 March)
- The cross-border circulation of road vehicles exceeding the maximum authorised dimensions (Federal Council 7 May; National Council 25 June)
Adapting to Article 290 and 291 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny (Federal Council 3 December; National Council 4 December)

With a view to the subsequent European Council on 22 May, the Main Committee adopted a communication in which it rejected the putting on the same level of nuclear energy and renewable energies stressing that nuclear energy does not constitute either a sustainable source of energy or a viable option in the fight against climate change.

Against the background of the European Council meeting on 24 and 25 October it furthermore adopted an opinion submitted to the Federal Government in which it called on the latter to promote swift implementation of inter alia the common banking supervision and the negotiations on the financial transaction tax. The opinions adopted by the Standing Sub-Committee of the Austrian National Council on matters concerning the EU related to the following planned legislation at EU level:

- Recommendation to authorise the Commission to open negotiations for an Economic Integration Agreement with Canada (15 January)
- Plant reproductive material (2 July)
- Establishment of a European Public Prosecutor’s Office (22 October)
- Adaptation of legal acts providing for the use of the regulatory procedure with scrutiny (4 December)
- Genetically modified maize (4 December)

The plenary of the National Council discussed a report by the Standing Sub-Committee on matters relating to the EU on the Communication from the Commission/Annual Growth Survey 2013 (191th session of the National Council, 27 February) and the report on the country specific recommendations for Austria (215th session of the National Council, 4 July).

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 Councils. Under the system governing participation of the federal provinces in the internal decision-making process on EU proposals (EU-Länderbeteiligungsverfahren), a total of 18 joint statements were submitted and six joint statements adopted in line with Article 23d par. 2 of the Federal Constitutional Act.

Chaired by the FMEIA, Austria’s positions in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) are coordinated on a weekly basis. This process ensures 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-forming 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
Austria in the European Union

beginning of each year. These reports provide information to members of parliament in the lead-up to decision-making processes and enable them to take part in the political opinion-forming process at a very early stage.

Networking among parliamentarians at supra-national level is pivotal for the exchange of information and experience in the EU. Following a meeting of speakers of parliaments of EU Member States held in Madrid in 1989, the Conference of Parliamentary Committees for Union Affairs (COSAC) was established as a forum facilitating inter-parliamentary exchange. COSAC is to offer MPs the opportunity to discuss the role of national parliaments at EU level. Each national parliament and the EP are represented in COSAC with six members. The national parliaments of EU accession candidate countries are invited to participate with three observers each in the bi-annual meetings. COSAC meetings usually take place in the EU Member State holding the Presidency of the EU Council. In the past few years, COSAC especially focused on the practical implementation of the subsidiarity principle.

On 16 and 17 October, Vilnius was the venue of the inaugural conference of the Interparliamentary Conference on Economic and Financial Governance of the European Union set up in accordance with Article 13 of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance of the Economic and Monetary Union (“Fiscal Compact”; see Chapter 2.4.1.), which entered into force on 1 January. The Council had suggested its establishment in the Fiscal Compact in order to take better account of the calls for enhanced democratic legitimacy and accountability. Austria was represented by four members of the National Council and MP and Vice President of the EP Othmar Karas. The working sessions dealt with “founding topics“ (purpose and vision of the conference) and issues related to post-crisis economic governance in the EU, banking union, budgetary consolidation and structural reform. In the conference’s final statement, participants inter alia stressed their expectations regarding the development of effective and regular cooperation between national parliaments and the EP, especially with respect to the European semester. Reference was also made of the key role played by national parliaments in monitoring the implementation of relevant policy areas at national level.

2.3.1. Internal Policies of the European Union

2.3.1.1. Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020

At the European Council of 7 and 8 February, the Heads of State and Government reached an agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014–2020 based on the Commission proposal. Building on that agreement, intensive negotiations were then held with the EP. After a consensus had been reached at political level on 27 June, the MEPs on 19 November formally agreed on the MFF and the budget for 2014 with the necessary two thirds majority, and both were subsequently adopted by the Council on 2 December.
The agreement reached at the European Council caps the maximum spending limit (commitment appropriation) for the EU with 28 Member States at 960 billion euros (at 2011 prices), which amounts to 1% of the EU’s Gross National Income (GNI). Compared to the MFF 2007–2013, the overall spending ceiling was thus reduced by 3.5% in real terms. This is in line with the position held by Austria and a number of other EU Member States throughout the entire discussion process, which against the background of the national budget consolidation efforts provided for a clear cut in the overall spending framework proposed by the Commission.

In spite of these cuts in the overall spending volume, funding for “future-oriented areas” (research, education and infrastructure projects) was increased. Funding for EU external assistance tools also saw an increase, while significant cuts were introduced for cohesion and agriculture, which remain the EU’s largest expenditure items.

On the income side, the European Council of 27 and 28 June prepared the ground for a safer and more transparent own resources system. A high-level inter-institutional group is to discuss longer-term perspectives for the own resources system.

2.3.1.2. Competition, Tax Issues and Harmonisation of National Laws

Further development of the EU state aid rules governing aid granted by Member States is based on Articles 106 to 109 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) and lies largely within the responsibility of the Commission. It regularly invites the EU Member States to participate in consultative meetings, issue statements and contribute to further developing the state aid acquis. On 1 August, the regulations on temporary acceptability of crisis-related assistance to financial institutions, which had been revised by the Commission, entered into force. On 14 November, the Commission started work on new regulations governing state aid for films and other audio-visual works. In December, the European Commission commissioned Member States with preparing drafts for a new state aid framework on the areas of environment and energy as well as research, development and innovation.

The European Council of 22 May stressed the importance of taking effective steps to fight tax evasion and tax fraud in order to protect revenues and ensure public confidence in the fairness and effectiveness of tax systems. It emphasised that this was particularly relevant in the current context of budget consolidation. To this end, it was necessary to combine measures at the national, European and global levels.

At international level, the G20 Leaders’ Declaration adopted at the Saint Petersburg summit held from 5 and 6 September, is a clear commitment to levying taxes in the country in which value is created (thus addressing base erosion and profit shifting by internationally active companies). At the
same time, the declaration endorses the respective action plan adopted by
the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). As
regards the automatic exchange of information, the G20 Heads of State and
Government underlined their support for the model developed by the OECD
as global standard and the plan to introduce automatic exchange of informa-
tion on tax matters by the end of 2015. At EU level, the Commission pro-
posal for a revised Savings Taxation Directive featured on the agenda of both
the European Council and the EU Council. On 14 May, the Economic and
Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) mandated the European Commission
with opening negotiations on a savings taxation agreement with the third
countries Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland.
The European Council of 19 and 20 December called for negotiations with
third countries to be stepped up and requested the European Commission to
submit a progress report for its meeting in March 2014.

The objective of the planned Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) is on the one
hand to make the financial sector pay a fair share in the cost of crisis manage-
ment and on the other hand to increase the stability of the financial markets
through higher taxation of highly speculative transactions. As agreement on
FTT at the level of all EU Member States based on the Commission pro-
posal of September 2011 was not possible, 11 EU Member States (Austria,
Germany, France, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia, Estonia, Spain, Italy,
Slovakia) declared themselves ready at the ECOFIN meeting in Luxembourg
on 9 October to support the introduction of FTT by way of “enhanced coop-
eration”, the design of which was discussed in 2013.

2.3.1.3. Employment and Social Policy

Priorities of EU Employment and Social Policy included activities related
to the European Semester, the fight against youth unemployment and the
completion of negotiations on the respective programmes and funds for
the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014–2020. Another priority was
strengthening the social dimension of the Economic and Monetary Union.
At their meetings, ministers adopted Council Conclusions on the Annual
Growth Survey 2013 in the context of the European Semester, the employ-
ment policy guidelines and recommendations to the individual Member
States on their national reform programmes for 2013 (including macroeco-
nomic imbalances procedures). The European Council recommendation on
establishing a Youth Guarantee in line with the Austrian model and a Coun-
cil Declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships were adopted
in order to promote youth employment. The latter forms the basis for a
platform for inter-governmental exchange on designing dual education and
apprenticeship training systems. At European level, the European Centre for
the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) is to support Member
States in their relevant efforts. With respect to the practical implementation
of the Youth Guarantee, meetings were held in Berlin and Paris in which
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

Federal Minister Rudolf Hundstorfer (in Berlin together with Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann) participated.

Progress was achieved in the field of EU Labour Law. Political agreement was reached on the Directive on minimum requirements for enhancing worker mobility between Member States by improving the acquisition and preservation of supplementary pension rights. Furthermore, the trilogue negotiations on the Freedom of Movement Directive were also successfully concluded. General approaches were adopted on the implementation of Directive 96/71/EC on the posting of workers in the framework of the provision of services and on the Decision on enhanced cooperation between public employment services.

In the field of health and safety at work, a Directive was adopted on minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields). Negotiations on a Directive amending five EU Directives on health and safety at work as a result of the adoption of Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008 on the classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures also reached a positive conclusion.

Deliberations on a Regulation on the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund and on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived were also concluded. The “Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme” and the “EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation” for the period 2014 to 2020 were likewise completed.

Progress reports were presented with respect to the Directive on improving the gender balance among non-executive directors of public listed companies and on related activities. Another progress report related to the implementation of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. Conclusions were adopted inter alia on social investment for growth and social cohesion. The Third Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion met in Brussels from 26 to 27 November.

2.3.1.4. Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion

EU structural and cohesion policy remains an important tool for investments, growth and the creation of jobs at EU level and for structural reform at national level. One third of the EU budget continues to be allocated to these areas. In November, Council, EP and Commission agreed on a new legal framework (six regulations) for the period 2014–2020. The EU cohesion policy’s primary focus on less developed regions remains unchanged also for the future funding period. The changes adopted relate first and foremost to making more efficient use of funds, especially as regards the introduction of conditionalities concerning the disbursement of funds. Another important element in this connection is a better definition of clear, transparent and measu-
reable targets regarding accountability and results. Cohesion policy is also to make a direct contribution to managing the financial and economic crisis. If necessary, the national co-funding share can be reduced to enable faster absorption of Structural Fund funding and thus more effectively promote growth and employment. In the context of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Territorial Cooperation Programme (ETC) will also be available in the new funding period. The ETC was set up to promote cooperation between Member States and EU Neighbourhood regions. To this end, cross-border and transnational cooperation programmes as well as thematic network programmes will also be continued.

2.3.1.5. Internal Market, free Movement of Goods, Industry and Tourism

2.3.1.5.1. Internal Market and free Movement of Goods

The single market is an integral element of the EU. The primary goal is the creation of an economic area without internal frontiers within which goods, capital, persons and services may move freely. According to calculations carried out by the European Commission, the completion of the single market following removal of the last hurdles would translate in an annual increase of the EU gross domestic product by approximately 0.2 – 0.4 % (calculated for a ten year period) and also have a positive impact on employment and the EU’s competitiveness compared with other economic areas (such as the USA, Japan or emerging countries).

The past few years have seen a range of efforts within the EU towards adding momentum to the completion of the single market. The goal was primarily to identify and dismantle remaining obstacles. In April 2011, the Commissioner for Internal Market and Services Michel Barnier thus presented the Single Market Act I (SMA I), which includes twelve levers or key actions. In October 2012, the Single Market Act II (SMA II) was published. It provides for a further twelve key actions and proposals for legislative actions aimed at further deepening the internal market. As mandated by the European Council, all key actions proposed in the two Single Market Acts are to be adopted and implemented as far as possible. Almost all legal actions covered by the SMA I have already been adopted by the Council; one of the few exceptions includes, for instance, the adoption of a regulation to enable electronic identification and signatures. In the context of SMA II, the new public procurement rules including electronic invoicing in public procurement, the revised Directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, the facilitation of activities by cross-border venture capital funds and the new unitary patent protection in the EU accompanied by a single specialised jurisdiction aimed at making full use of the potential offered by the internal market are of particular importance for Austria’s economy.

The following policies were inter alia part of the completion of the single market:
• **Smart Regulation**

Smart regulation is a general strategy pursued by the EU to develop legal framework conditions that are more consumer and business friendly. The concept is based on simplification of existing legal provisions, reduction of administrative burdens, impact assessments and public consultations, monitoring the application of community law and ex-post evaluations of legal provisions.

On 12 December 2012, the European Commission published a communication on regulatory fitness of EU regulations as a work programme for the next few years in the field of smart regulation. The **REFIT Programme (Regulatory Fitness and Performance Programme)** is not exclusively allocated to any special EU service but is part of the already established horizontal Smart Regulation Agenda.

REFIT aims to further reduce the regulatory burden on citizens and businesses and especially the hurdles raised by EU regulations. Against this background, a first measure launched under this initiative consisted in critically screening the entire EU acquis for potential inefficiencies. In a communication published in October, the Commission presented the results of this review. It identified areas where the Commission will take action and where, in the interests of efficient regulation, it decided that no action is necessary for the time being. An annex sets out the REFIT actions which are currently being implemented or the subject of a legislative proposal.

In its REFIT Communication of 12 December 2012, the European Commission pointed out that its programme of action 2008 to 2012 aimed at Administrative Burden Reduction (**ABR**) had achieved its goal to reduce burdens on business stemming from EU legislation by 25% by 2012. Subsequently, the Commission initiated the programme “**ABR Plus**“, focused on the implementation of the measures adopted under the ABR programme.

• **Public Procurement**

In December 2011, the Commission adopted a package of three new directives aimed at a major overhaul of public procurement rules in the EU. On 15 July political agreement was reached on the package that is to be adopted by the EP in January 2014 in the first reading. The package provides for the simplification of procedures and greater flexibility in public procurement and thus creates opportunities for public authorities to ensure greater inclusion of societal goals in the procurement process. The new directives furthermore provide for a complete change to electronic procedures in public procurement and the promotion of professionalisation of procurement systems. From 2014 onwards, this reform package will be implemented in Austria in close coordination between federal government, federal provinces and all relevant stakeholders.
• Modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive

Political agreement was reached in June on a modernisation of the Professional Qualifications Directive. Formal approval by the EP and the Council was given in autumn and transposition must be completed within two years from its entry into effect. The directive’s scope covers access to regulated professions (professions with legally binding qualification requirements) based on vocational training undertaken in another Member State. The key changes relate to the introduction of a European Professional Card, transparency and the justification of regulated professions, more online information and e-government for citizens as well as new forms of automatic recognition. The new regulations are regarded as positive, especially as recognition procedures have been made more citizen and user friendly. Concerns have, however, been raised with respect to the new transparency provisions as they will be to the disadvantage of countries such as Austria which traditionally have a large number of regulated professions.

• Programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises 2014–2020

On 30 May 2012, the Competitive Council agreed on a partial general approach on the Proposal for a Regulation establishing a Programme for the competitiveness of enterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises (COSME) submitted by the Commission on 30 November 2011. Following adoption by the EP in November 2013, the programme was also adopted by the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council on 5 December 2013. This programme is welcomed as it is expected to give an important impetus to growth and entrepreneurship in Austria and the EU.

The main goals pursued by this programme, which is equipped with a planned budget of 2.3 billion euros, include facilitating access to funding, promoting entrepreneurial culture and strengthening both competitiveness and internationality of European small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). The programme is in many areas a continuation of the current Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (EIP), which forms part of the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme (CIP). Within the COSME budget a share of approx. 1.4 billion euros is earmarked for loans and risk capital supplementing the national funding programmes. It is expected that up to 330,000 European SMEs will be supported in taking out loans under this programme.

• Implementation of the Small Business Act in Austria

In January, the Commission submitted a communication on the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan. Developed on the basis of the Small Business Act, this action plan focuses in particular on entrepreneurial education, improving framework conditions for entrepreneurial activities, safeguarding existing human entrepreneurial capital and supporting potential entrepreneurs and the new generation of entrepreneurs, as well as reaching out
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

to groups whose entrepreneurial potential has not yet been fully tapped (women, young people, migrants and senior citizens). Austria welcomes the Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan, because it can make a key contribution to promoting the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship since it, for instance, also addresses issues such as the reduction of administrative burdens and matters related to insolvency law. The promotion of entrepreneurial spirit, the ongoing improvement of framework conditions and support to potential business starters are pivotal requirements for growth and competitiveness.

On the part of the Commission, the action plan is being implemented in the context of competitiveness and industrial policy using the administrative mechanisms for the Small Business Act. The network of SME Ambassadors contributes to ensuring that the proposed measures are implemented successfully. In the context of the Entrepreneurship Ambassador meeting held in Vienna on 18 September, special attention was paid to the topic of training and skills – taking account of the dual education approach used in Austria. The topic of entrepreneurship education will continue to feature prominently on the agenda of the SME Ambassadors’ working programme 2014. The strength of this network resides in its informal character, which will be further strengthened by regular reporting in the Competitiveness Council.

• European Patent

In addition to the two Regulations on the European patent with unitary effect (EU Patent) governing the protection of intellectual property and industrial property rights adopted in December 2012, an international agreement on a Unified Patent Court was adopted in February. Austria is the first Member State to have ratified this agreement.

The discussions on the Commission proposal on the revision of the trade mark system, more specifically the proposal for a revision of the Regulation of the Community trade mark, a recast of the Trade Marks Harmonisation Directive and a revision of the Regulation on the fees payable to the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market, were launched in spring but have not yet been concluded.

• Technical Harmonisation and Market Surveillance

Agreement was reached on adapting the Lifts Directive to the new legal framework for the surveillance of product safety. The new provision must thus be transposed to national law by the beginning of 2016. In the field of the Directive on personal protective equipment, the Gas Appliances Directive and the Directive on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to measures against the emission of gaseous and particulate pollutants from internal combustion engines to be installed in non-road mobile machinery, further progress will be achieved in 2014. Following the adoption of the Product Safety and Market Surveillance Package, work can begin on the national transposition of the provisions relating to six EU direc-
tives (machinery, personal protective equipment, lifts, gas appliances, noise emission in the environment by equipment for outdoor use), which had been adopted based on the 1994 Trade Regulation Act.

• CO2 –Passenger Vehicles
In December, Member States reached agreement on the draft amending the EU Regulation on setting emission performance standards for new passenger cars as part of the Community’s integrated approach towards reducing CO2 emissions from light commercial vehicles presented by the Commission in August 2012. The decision on the adoption of this draft by the EP and the European Council is expected at the beginning of 2014. This draft is of particular importance for the Austrian supply industry. Austria supports the principal reduction goal of 95g CO2/km by 2020, which was already agreed and adopted by all Member States in the previous regulations from 2009 (Regulation 443/2009). In this context, the “super credits” (i.e. that more credits may be claimed for low emission vehicles up to 2022) represent a valuable incentive for the development and introduction of new low emission technologies.

• REACH
The ongoing implementation of the roadmap on substances of very high concern (Art. 57 of the REACH Regulation) is particularly noteworthy. In line with the roadmap, which was presented in February, all substances of very high concern must be included in a “Candidate List” by 2020. According to the review completed in spring, the REACH Regulation also represents the appropriate framework for regulating nano materials, and thus no special legislation governing nano materials will be required in the chemicals field. A new draft regulation on a nano register is also planned for mid-2014.

2.3.1.5.2. European Industrial Policy
Since the beginning of the economic crisis there have been ongoing efforts at European level towards developing an integrated European industrial policy. In 2010, the Commission thus published a Communication on “An integrated industrial policy for the globalisation era – putting competitiveness and sustainability at centre stage”, which is at the same time one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In 2012, the Commission adopted an update of the Industrial Policy flagship initiative – “A stronger European Industry for Growth and Economic Recovery”. This updated version provides for horizontal measures aimed at accelerating economic recovery as well as promoting growth and employment in the EU. The initiative strives to strengthen Europe’s industrial competitiveness and facilitate the transition to a sustainable, low-carbon and resource-efficient economy. The focal activities relate to promotion of investment in
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

innovative and new technologies; the creation of an environment that enables enterprises to capitalise on the opportunities offered by the European single market and the international markets; improved access to funding; increased investment in education, training and skills. The EU is to provide the necessary framework conditions in order to stimulate new investment, accelerate the introduction of new technologies and enhance resource efficiency. In a first step, six priority action lines (markets for advanced manufacturing technologies for clean production; sustainable industrial and construction policy and sustainable use of raw materials; clean vehicles; markets for bio-based products; markets for key enabling technologies; smart grids) were identified and proposed for immediate action.

As one of the outcomes of the June European Council, the EU Heads of State and Government called for a broad-based horizontal and coherent approach promoting a modern industrial policy in Europe, which accompanies structural change and economic renewal. Another exchange of views on the framework conditions for a competitive industry sector in Europe was held at the Competitiveness Council meeting in September. The outcome of these deliberations will also be addressed at the European Council in spring 2014. Areas that were identified as crucial for Europe’s competitiveness included innovation, access to funding and high energy prices. At the Competitiveness Council in December, Council Conclusions were adopted on European Industrial Policy. The European Council meeting in spring 2014 will explicitly focus on ways and means towards re-industrialising Europe and increasing the competitiveness of its industry. In the lead-up to this meeting, it was announced that the goal striven for is the adoption of an Industrial Compact that is to contain regulatory amendments and new political measures.

2.3.1.5.3. Tourism

The tourism sector is of enormous national economic importance. Based on the new EU competences laid down in the Lisbon Treaty, the European Commission in June 2010 presented the Communication “Europe, the world’s No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe”. Thus a new framework for action was created for European tourism policy. The proposed measures for the promotion of tourism involve four priority areas, namely stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector; promote the development of sustainable, responsible and high-quality tourism; consolidate the image and profile of Europe as a collection of sustainable and high-quality destinations; and maximise the potential of EU financial policies and instruments for developing tourism. Based on these priority areas, a comprehensive action plan involving short, medium and long-term initiatives was prepared.

In implementing the action plan, a number of measures were launched that are to contribute to improving data quality, level of information and knowledge, framework conditions and networking. This includes the publication
of a study on facilitation of legitimate travelling and visa policy, preparatory work on the establishment of a Virtual Tourism Monitoring Centre, the continuation of the Eurobarometer surveys on travel behaviour, the development of sustainability indicators for destinations, common communication and advertising activities in non-EU countries and support for cross-border projects (such as senior citizens’ tourism, European Routes of Culture, thematic offers, European Destinations of Excellence and initiatives to promote accessibility in tourism).

2.3.1.6. Free Movement of People, Services and Capital

The Services Directive 2006/123/EC (SD), which liberalises the cross-border provision of services and the freedom of establishment, had to be transposed into national law by the end of 2009. In June 2012, the EC published a study which, based on a conservative estimate, assumes that the EU gross domestic product will increase by 0.8 per cent as a result of the directive’s transposition. According to its estimates, an increase of 1.6 per cent in EU GDP would be possible on top of that if all Member States lifted all restrictions on cross-border movement of services and would follow the lead of those five Member States that have already achieved the highest level of implementation. On 8 June 2102, the Commission adopted its report on the implementation of the SD (“A Partnership for New Growth in Services 2012–2015”).

At the beginning of 2013, a peer review was conducted in the context of which certain requirements under Article 15 of the SD were scrutinised (legal form, shareholding requirements) for the professions accountants and certified public accountants, architects, patent lawyers, tax advisors and veterinarians. As a follow-up to the SD, discussions and implementation activities will focus in the next few years on establishing “second generation” single points of contact as comprehensive e-government centres that enable enterprises to handle all phases of cross-border service provision electronically.

2.3.1.7. Agriculture and Fisheries

The priorities in the field of agriculture focused on the completion of the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and related to this, the definition of the multiannual financial framework by 2020. Other important topics on the agenda were the promotion of farm products, the package of measures to modernise, simplify and strengthen the food chain in Europe, and the new EU forest strategy.

In the second half of 2011, the Commission presented a set of legal proposals to reform the CAP in which Council and EP were for the first time legislators equipped with equal legislative rights. The objective pursued by the reform of the CAP is to further strengthen competitiveness, sustainability and rural areas as well as to guarantee the provision of food and healthy, safe and high-quality nutrition to Europe’s citizens. After political agreement on the
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

CAP reform package had been reached during the Irish Council Presidency on 24 and 25 June at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council in Luxembourg and the subsequent trilogue, it was formally adopted at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council held on 16 and 17 December under Lithuanian Presidency. The package thus adopted includes direct payments, rural development, the common organisation of the markets in agricultural products (single CMO), financing, management and monitoring of the CAP and transitional provisions for 2014.

Following the Green Paper on promotion measures and information provision for agricultural products “A reinforced value-added European Strategy for promoting the tastes of Europe”, which it presented in 2011 and the respective legislative proposals adopted in March 2012, the Commission presented legislative proposals on 21 November. The goal is the provision of a better, more ambitious and targeted information and promotion policy for agricultural products. By launching these activities the Commission strives to develop and tap new markets for European agricultural products both in the single market and in non-EU countries and to raise consumers’ awareness of the quality of these products.

On 6 May, the Commission published the package of measures to modernise, standardise and simplify regulations in the fields of official food controls, animal health, plant health and plant reproductive material. In future, five regulations are to replace around seventy legal acts. Under Lithuanian Presidency, numerous sessions and meetings of council working groups were held and an overview of the current status of negotiations was presented by the Lithuanian Presidency at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 16 and 17 December.

On 20 September, the Commission published a communication entitled “A New EU Forest Strategy: for forests and the forest-based sector”, which was presented to the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 23 September. Together with numerous other Member States, Austria welcomed the preparation and submission of a new common strategy in this sector as forestry and wood processing play an important role in Austria.

In fisheries the main focus was on the completion of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the negotiations on the new European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). Other topics dealt with included the Multiannual Management Plans, the negotiations with Norway and the coastal countries on jointly managed fish stocks, the External Fisheries Policy and the Integrated Maritime Policy.

Under Irish Presidency, the new Basis Regulation for a CFP and the new Common Market Regulation for Fisheries Products were completed at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 13 and 14 May. Negotiations on a new “Fund for the EU’s Maritime and Fisheries Policy for the period 2014–2020” – which is part of the CFP – were continued under Lithuanian Presidency.
but, however, not completed. Austria attaches special importance to the aspects of **sustainable management of fisheries resources** in EU waters and the plans for developing inland aquaculture as well as the latter’s promotion in the context of the EMFF.

2.3.1.8. Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council

The **Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council** met twice during the Irish Presidency (11 March and 10 June) and twice during the Lithuanian Presidency (10 October and 5 December). An informal Council meeting held in Vilnius from 15 to 16 September was dedicated to the topic of the “Single European Sky”. Council and EP agreed on a regulation on the **Connecting Europe Facility (CEF)**, the funding instrument for the Trans-European Networks (TEN) in the transport, energy and telecommunications sectors. This regulation defines the criteria, methods and processes for the Union’s financial contributions to the TEN projects as well as funding for the individual sectors. The funding budgeted for energy amounts to 5.90 billion euros, for transport/TEN to 14.95 billion euros, for ICT/Digital Agenda to 1.14 billion euros and for cohesion projects/transport to 11.31 billion euros (each at current prices). In parallel to the adoption of the CEF, Council and Parliament reached agreement on the new regulation concerning Union guidelines for setting up the Trans-European Transport Network (**TEN-Transport**). As Austria’s main transport axes (Danube, Brenner and Baltic-Adriatic Axis) are part of central network corridors, the relevant resolution is of essential importance for Austria.


In the field of **aviation**, the Council adopted general orientations on the Regulation on occurrence reporting in civil aviation and decided to authorise the Commission to re-open negotiations with the Federative Republic of Brazil with a view to establishing a comprehensive agreement on air transport services. With respect to **navigation**, the Council adopted a general approach on the Directive on maritime equipment and on repealing Council Directive 96/98/EC. Also in December, the EU Ministers of Transport agreed on a general approach on the Directive on building up minimum **infrastructure for alternative fuels across the EU**.

At its October meeting, the European Council strongly urged Member States to take all necessary measures towards completing the Digital Single Market by 2015. These include central activities planned in the context of **eGov-**
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

Work on a new Regulation on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market ("eIDAS" – Regulation) was intensified in order to promote secure electronic interaction between companies, citizens and public administration and to enhance the efficiency of public services and procurement as well as the provision of services in cross-border electronic business transactions. The Commission stressed that the topics “electronic identification” (eID), electronic signature and other electronic trust services are of key relevance for the functioning of the digital internal market. By the end of the year, trilogue negotiations were held with the European Parliament on Articles 1 to 19 of the Regulation.

In the field of cyber security, discussions focused on the EU Cyber Security Strategy, which was presented in February and consists of a communication and a proposal for a Directive concerning measures to ensure a high common level of network and information security across the Union (NIS-D). This initiative was launched against the background of an alarming increase in cyber security incidents, which have the potential to pose a threat to prosperity, safety and security in the European area. The EU Cyber Security Strategy is based on three pillars: network and information security, fighting cybercrime and the external dimension. A progress report on the strategy was adopted in December.

2.3.1.9. Environment

At the first meeting of the Environment Council during the Irish Presidency on 21 March, an orientation debate was held on the Fuel Quality Directive and on the Renewable Energies Directive, which are to take account of indirect land use change (ILUC) resulting from biofuel production. Such indirect land use changes occur when energy crops crowd out the cultivation of food or animal feedstock on areas that had previously not been used for agricultural purposes.

Another orientation debate was held on the proposal to amend the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (EIA), last amended in 2003. The proposal mainly aims at enhancing procedural efficiency while improving EIA quality. In future EIAs should also take into account current environmental policy challenges and thus reflect issues like biodiversity, climate change, disaster risks as well as consumption of land and other natural resources. The scope of the EIA Directive, i.e. the definition of project types that are subject to an EIA, will, however, not be changed by the new proposal.

Another orientation debate dealt with the proposal for a Regulation on access to genetic resources and fair and equitable sharing of benefits with a view to implementing the Nagoya Protocol to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The regulation’s objective is a harmonised implementation of the Protocol’s provisions at EU level, especially with respect to obligations for users. The goal is to ensure that only legally accessed resources will be
utilised. In addition to the obligation of users of genetic resources to exercise due diligence, the Commission also suggests the introduction of an EU-wide system of reliable collections.

On 18 June, at the second meeting of the Environment Council Conclusions on an EU Strategy on Adaptations to Climate Change were adopted. In their discussions, Member States supported inter alia the improvement of the knowledge base and the implementation of measures at national and regional level.

Some Member States commented in their statements on the progress report on ILUC (emissions attributable to indirect land use change resulting from the production of biofuels) presented by the Presidency. Both the threshold level for conventional biofuels and the mutual recognition of verification of compliance with the sustainability criteria were addressed. The Commission stressed that it would continue to adhere to the 5 % threshold it had proposed.

The Environment Council endorsed Conclusions on the Rio+20 follow-up. In a further exchange of views on the report of the UN Secretary-General’s High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the post-2015 development agenda, the report was welcomed as valuable input for the future elaboration process. It was pointed out that it was necessary to adopt a comprehensive approach towards a common framework which also takes account of environmental aspects and sustainable development. The definition of clear requirements, including a roadmap, for the further negotiation process and the convergence and combination of both thematic fields were also addressed. When deliberating potential implementation measures and the introduction of another political forum, some Member States referred to the outcomes of the Rio+20 Summit.

At the first Environment Council under Lithuanian Presidency on 14 October, an orientation debate was held on the Commission proposal to amend the Regulation on shipments of waste. This proposal envisages amending and supplementing the current regulation in order to harmonise and strengthen the enforcement and inspections of illegal waste shipments in the Member States. To this end, the proposed regulation submitted by the Commission provides for inspection plans based in particular on risk assessments for specific waste streams to be prepared by Member States. In order to facilitate controls, the competent authorities are to have the opportunity to require evidence from suspected illegal waste exporters and if such evidence is not presented they may assume the waste shipment to be illegal.

In preparation for the World Climate Change Conference in Warsaw at the end of November and beginning of December, the Council agreed on Conclusions highlighting the most important elements of the EU position. The EU stance focuses in particular on the implementation of existing decisions and advancing work on the two work flows under the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action.
At the Environment Council on 13 December, ministers exchanged views on a draft regulation proposed by the Commission on the monitoring, reporting and verification of CO2 emissions from maritime transport. Currently, CO2 emissions from international maritime transport, which account for about 3% of global emissions, are not covered in the reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol. Within the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the EU is also advocating relevant measures. IMO member states have already agreed on binding efficiency standards if only for large vessels, these standards are, however, not yet in force. The Commission’s long-term goal is the introduction of global CO2 reduction targets for international maritime transport linked with market-based measures to achieve these targets. Austria is not affected as no sea-going vessels sail under Austrian flag.

An orientation debate was held on the Commission proposal from September on prevention and control of the introduction and spread of invasive alien species. The objective of the measures proposed is to prevent new alien invasive species from entering the EU and to fight and manage invasive alien species with an EU wide impact that have already spread. The draft resolution provides for a prioritisation and the preparation of a list of a maximum of fifty species. This list is, however, to include only species of EU-wide importance.

2.3.1.10. Energy and Trans-European Networks

The objective pursued by European energy policy is ensuring secure, affordable and sustainable energy supply. This plays a pivotal role in reaching numerous further EU core targets, such as a competitive economy, intelligent, integrative and sustainable growth and the creation of jobs, climate and environmental protection as well as the provision of support to the national economies of developing countries. The European Council as the leading political body of the Union performed the latest evaluation on the current approach and developments in May. The necessary steps to be taken based on these findings include a swift and full completion of the internal energy market, improvement of investment conditions for relevant infrastructure, diversification of energy supply, exploitation of the energy efficiency potential and addressing the issue of high energy prices and costs.

A fully functioning, i.e. a competitive, integrated and liquid internal energy market is considered an essential milestone on the path towards achieving energy policy goals. Consumer and business alike will benefit from the internal energy market as it will provide secure supply and low energy prices. Its completion by the end of 2014 and the development of interconnections so as to put an end to any isolation of Member States from European networks by 2015, were thus also advanced in 2013. The Third Internal Energy Market Package and some other relevant legal acts have not yet been transposed by all Member States. Work is also underway on the development and adop-
tion of the remaining network codes, the opportunity of active consumer participation and the strengthening of consumer rights. Austria has already transposed the Third Internal Energy Market Package that entered into force in 2011; since September 2011 the Commission has initiated infringement proceedings against Member States that failed to fulfil their requirements.

The completion of the internal energy market and the achievement of the EU energy policy targets still require major investments into energy infrastructure. Three new instruments were created with a view to promoting such investments: the Infrastructure Regulation, the Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and the list of Projects of Common Interest (PCIs). If an energy infrastructure project is so important that it is classified as a project of common interest (PCI), the Infrastructure Regulation is to serve as a basis for its swift implementation. This is achieved by preferential treatment and simplified and accelerated permit granting procedures. To this end, each Member State has to designate one national competent authority that is responsible for facilitating and co-ordinating the PCI permitting process (“one-stop-shop”) – in Austria this authority is the Federal Ministry for Economy, Family and Youth. At the same time, the opportunities for public participation and environmental protection are to be strengthened. In October, the Commission adopted a first list of PCIs which also included 18 projects related to Austria. The list is to be reviewed every two years. The CEF provides for infrastructure development funding, which is not restricted to energy but also includes transport and telecommunication. Total funding under the CEF amounts to 33.2 billion euros of which 5.81 billion are allocated to the energy area. Labelling as PCI is a prerequisite for access to CEF funding but is, however, not a guarantee that it will be awarded.

In order to stimulate investment in the energy and environmental sector and to prevent a fragmentation of the internal market due to differing subsidies and funding regimes, the European Council in May called for a revision of the state aid rules by the Commission. On 5 November, the Commission submitted its market intervention package entitled “delivering the internal electricity market and making the most of public intervention”, which consisted of a Communication on making the most of public intervention, guidance on production-side interventions (capacity mechanism), guidance on incorporating demand-side flexibility in electricity markets, guidance on the promotion of renewable energies and guidance on the use of renewable energy cooperation mechanisms. The package is generally welcomed by Austria. The use of renewable energy cooperation mechanisms, for instance, enables more efficient attainment of the European 20–20–20 targets as Member States with a lower renewables potential may use other Member States’ excess potential. Austria also supports the striven for market-based design and harmonisation of funding systems for renewables. It is, however, necessary to apply these requirements on all direct and indirect market distorting subsidies for fossil fuels and mature technologies, especially nuclear energy.
The **Guidelines on environmental and energy aid** prepared by the **European Commission** are related to the guidance package on public interventions in the energy market. The latest draft submitted for consultations in December did no longer mention nuclear energy – thanks to effective interventions on the part of Germany and Austria. The revised guidelines should be adopted in 2014.

Investment requires reliable, clear and long-term conditions – to this end the EC is working on the development of a **framework for climate and energy policies for the period up to 2030**. In March, the Commission presented its Green Paper on “A 2030 Framework for Climate and Energy Policies” that served as the basis for a public consultation process. In a parallel process, the EP presented a draft initiative report in October. In a first statement on the Green Paper, Austria supported a CO2 target together with a renewables target. Austria furthermore underlined the importance of striking a balance between the three energy policy targets – competitiveness, supply security and sustainability. At the beginning of 2014, the EC intends to present a proposal consisting of a communication and an Impact Assessment which is to serve the European Council as a basis and reference for defining an initial set of framework conditions in March 2014.

As early as 2007, the EC had adopted a Communication laying the foundations for the European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (**SET-Plan**). By making a substantial contribution to the Union’s climate and energy policy, the plan is to expand the scope and coordination of European activities in the field of energy technologies. On 2 May, the EC submitted the **Communication on Energy Technologies and Innovation**, which outlines the following key developments that are needed: unlocking the full potential of energy, delivering competitive solutions for the energy system and fostering innovations in real environments and through a market-driven framework. The principle observed in this context is that the energy sector is to be considered as holistically as possible, i.e. the energy system, the innovation chain and the funding opportunities together and in terms of any interconnections with energy policy. Austria strictly opposes any increase in Community funding for nuclear fission but is generally interested in the other content of the SET plan. With respect to problematic aspects – for instance the SET’s focus on large-scale projects and lack of focus on energy efficiency – Austria has from the outset worked towards achieving changes. The fact that the most recent EC Communication places a key focus on unlocking the full potential of energy may thus be considered as the result of successful efforts in this area.

The question of **energy prices** has gained in importance in the European energy policy discussion at two levels: for households lower energy prices mean important savings that contribute to an affordable standard of living; for enterprises that are active in energy-intensive sectors lower energy prices mean enhanced competitiveness. In line with the Conclusions adopted by the European Council in May, the Commission will prepare an analysis of
the composition and drivers of energy prices, and thus electricity prices, in the EU Member States to be presented in January 2014. This is to provide the basis for an in-depth discussion of the topic at European level in 2014.

With a view to **ensuring a reliable energy supply**, the EU is working towards reducing its dependence on individual energy suppliers and supply routes, i.e. towards diversifying energy routes and sources. A core element of the relevant efforts is the southern corridor, addressed in the Infrastructure Regulation, which is to supply the European market with natural gas from the Caspian region. In June, the Shah-Deniz Consortium decided between two potential pipeline projects for transporting natural gas from Azerbaijan to Europe. The consortium decided against the **Nabucco West** project, which is co-funded by the OMV and leads from Central Europe to Baumgarten, and in favour of the **Trans-Adriatic Pipeline (TAP)** leading from Greece to Italy. The transnational natural **gas pipeline project South Stream** led by the Russian company Gazprom provides at least some diversification in transport routes and thus also contributes to supply security. South Stream will lead from the Black Sea via Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary to Slovenia and Northern Italy (Tarvisio) and could be connected to the natural gas hub in Baumgarten (Lower Austria). Construction works in South Russia and in Serbia started in November.

Another thematic priority set out in the Energy Infrastructure Regulation is the **introduction of smart grids technologies** across the EU, which shall inter alia enable the integration of large volumes of electricity from renewable and/or decentralised sources of energy into the transmission networks. Digital two-way communication in real-time enables interactive and smart monitoring of electricity production, transmission and consumption in smart grids. This can ensure provision of an economical, efficient and sustainable electricity system that boasts low power losses as well as high quality and supply security. For Austrian technology suppliers, smart grids and the related technologies provide an opportunity to succeed on the world market. Austria may thus come to serve as an example for successful innovation policy in the field of modern infrastructure and energy systems.

The EU cannot single-handedly manage the provision of sustainable, affordable and most of all reliably available energy. An important pre-requisite in this context is not only internal action by the EU but also joint efforts and speaking with one voice when representing common interests outside of Europe. As requested by the European Council of February 2011, the Commission, in its Communication of 7 September “The EU Energy Policy: Engaging Partners beyond our Borders”, for the first time presented a comprehensive concept for the **Union’s external energy policy**. In May, the European Council re-visited this topic and progress reports were subsequently prepared by the Commission and the Energy Ministers Council.

Overall, considerable achievements were made in all four core areas of external energy policy – better internal coordination and coherence, closer
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

cooperação between the EU and non-EU countries building on the internal energy market, deepening of energy partnerships and support to national economies in developing countries. Thus supply security (see special item) has been improved thanks to the diversification of energy sources and routes and maintaining cooperation with energy suppliers important to Europe. In contacts with partner countries and international organisations, the EU was able to share and pass on successful policy approaches in the field of sustainable energy policy, promotion of renewable energies, energy efficiency, research and innovation as well as regulation. Key principles were enshrined for transparent, competition-oriented and liquid energy markets. The Vienna-based Energy Community and the Energy Charter are of particular relevance and note in this context.

2.3.1.11. Consumer Protection

Substantial progress was made in the field of EU consumer protection as the formal adoption of the Directive on alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and the Regulation on online dispute resolution established an EU-wide legal framework for out-of-court dispute resolution in consumer disputes. Furthermore, the trilogue negotiations on the 2014–2020 Consumer Programme were successfully completed and a general approach was defined with regard to the proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the comparability of fees related to payment accounts, payment account switching and access to payment accounts with basic features.

2.3.1.12. Healthcare

In healthcare, following intense negotiations, work on the substance of the Regulation on clinical trials on medicinal products for human use was completed, adapting the existing EU rules to the dynamics of international clinical research in the medicinal area and harmonising and speeding up procedures, especially in the context of multi-national studies. This regulation also contributes to ensuring that Europe remains attractive as a location for research and to providing patients with early access to innovative medicinal products.

The Health for Growth Programme was also finalised. It focuses on four individual objectives with high potential for contributing towards economic growth by promoting citizens’ health. These objectives cover the development of innovative and sustainable health systems, increasing access to better and safer healthcare for citizens, preventing disease and promoting health, and protecting citizens from cross-border health threats.

Following an in-depth consultation process, the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission reached agreement on the Revision of the Tobacco Products Directive 2001/37/EC. The primary objective of this revision was to improve the functioning of the internal market for tobacco
and related products, while ensuring a high level of health protection for European citizens. The revised directive will focus on (primary) prevention among children and young people, cessation of tobacco consumption among adults and consumer protection. It will contain stricter provisions on the manufacture of tobacco products (ingredients), the appearance of tobacco products (unit packet, health warnings) and their sale, as well as provisions expanding the scope of the directive to include new products (nicotine-containing products and herbal products for smoking) and on cross-border distance sales, illicit trade in tobacco products and smokeless tobacco products (traceability and security features).

In the field of veterinary science/consumer healthcare, negotiations were started on a novel uniform animal health law, a new regulation on official controls performed along the food supply chain and a regulation on financing the 2014–2020 administrative costs. As agreement was reached with the EP, the intense negotiations on the financing regulation were also concluded. Furthermore, the proposed Regulations on food for infants and young children and on food for special medical purposes, which will replace the previously applicable provisions on dietary food, were adopted.

2.3.1.13. Education and Youth

On 11 December, the EU regulation establishing the new ‘Erasmus+’ programme for education, training, youth and sport was signed by the EP and the Council in Strasbourg. The programme covers measures in the field of education and training (successor of the lifelong learning programme (LLP) and EU programmes with third countries – the names of these programmes – Comenius, Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus and Grundtvig – will continue to be used, youth (successor of “Youth in Action”) and sports. It focuses on the promotion of mobility and transnational cooperation as well as on the exchange of proven practices in the fields of education and youth. Cooperation programmes and mass sports will be priorities of the programme’s sports section. The programme is open to all learners (apprentices, students) and to educators and trainers working in general and vocational education or in the youth and sports sectors. Up to five million young people and adults in Europe will benefit from the measures launched under this programme. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU will provide 14.7 billion euros for this programme, i.e. 40% more than in the previous financial period. In addition, approximately 1.68 billion euros will be made available for cooperation projects with third countries.

Innovative, fair educational systems of high quality are a central prerequisite for obtaining the EU 2020 objectives for growth and employment. In this context, the Council adopted conclusions regarding the European Commission’s communication on the new Rethinking Education strategy and on the educational aspects of the Annual Growth Survey 2013. The Council conclu-
The competent ministers of education also adopted conclusions on effective leadership in education, identifying the recruitment and employment conditions, the preparation of competent staff for leadership positions and the professional support of staff in leadership positions as factors of crucial importance for the quality of leadership in education. The Council also adopted conclusions on the social dimension of higher education, inviting the Member States to increase the participation of disadvantaged groups in higher education, to develop better progression routes into higher education and to establish clear mechanisms for recognising prior learning.

The European ambition of providing graduates of higher education facilities with international skills necessary to enable them to work all over the world and the efforts to strengthen Europe as an attractive destination for excellent international students are reflected in the conclusions on the global dimension of European higher education. Changes in higher education caused by globalisation and technological progress, growing global competition and the necessity for intensive exchange of knowledge and experience among higher education facilities all over the world are taken into account and the added value of increased internationalisation in the field of higher education is highlighted.

Mobility in the context of vocational training and the transfer of professional qualifications (qualifications from a vocational school) are crucial factors for improving the quality of education and are becoming increasingly important. A new funding priority has been in place under the company-based apprenticeship promotion system since 2012. Companies whose apprentices go on a work placement abroad are reimbursed for the pro rata share of the apprenticeship pay for the duration of the work placement.

In the 2013 Leonardo da Vinci application round, traineeships abroad were approved for 1,744 students, 373 apprentices, 279 persons in employment and 130 vocational education and training professionals. Including those apprentices who completed placements abroad outside the Lifelong Learning Programme (in cases where the duration of stay does not meet the criteria of the EU programmes and/or the traineeship takes place in a destination not covered by a EU programme) and those apprentices who participate in partnership projects, around 500 apprentices had the opportunity to gain work experience abroad in 2013.

The Vocational Training Act (Art. 27a) provides for a flexible system for the recognition of foreign qualifications and certificates in the context of comparable Austrian apprenticeship qualifications. Qualifications and certificates
acquired abroad, complemented with previous professional experience, are recognised as equivalent to Austrian apprenticeship qualifications. A mandatory supplementary exam (parts of the practical final apprenticeship exam) may be required if there are differences in the training systems or in the training duration. The inter-ministerial working group “Netzwerk Anerkennung” (recognition network) launched the website www.berufsanerkennung.at in order to increase transparency of the various options and responsibilities in the field of recognition of vocational training. In addition, contact points for people who have gained professional qualifications abroad (AST) have been set up in the Austrian provinces.

Under the European Youth Guarantee, measures such as increased cooperation of EU countries in providing educational systems with a practical orientation and/or dual educational systems were agreed on. The Council declaration on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships constitutes the basis for a platform for exchange across nations. At the European level, the Member States are to be supported by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). Austria is committed to this initiative and is, for instance, involved in an EU working group set up to this end (represented by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, and the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture).

2.3.1.14. Research, Technological Development and Outer Space

The key topic dealt with in the field of research and technological development was the completion of the negotiations on HORIZON 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014–2020). Based on partial general approaches taken by the research ministers and following several informal trilogues with the European Parliament, political agreement on the legislative package was reached under the Irish Presidency in the first half of 2013 and the package was formally adopted in December. The parts adopted by the Competitiveness Council on 3 December included the HORIZON 2020 regulation, the rules for the participation and dissemination of research results, the Specific Programme on the implementation of HORIZON 2020 and the texts on the formal integration and thematic approach of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). In mid-December, two texts on nuclear research were adopted: the EURATOM Research Framework Programme 2014–2018 and the complementary programme for the ITER project. In the negotiations for the EURATOM Research Framework Programme 2014–2018, Austria advocated the further reorientation of nuclear research focusing exclusively on safety aspects, building on what had already been achieved for the EURATOM Research Framework Programme 2012–2013: in the field of nuclear research (nuclear fission) funds should be used exclusively for the benefit of safety and for the best possible protection of the population. In the light of the Fukushima disaster, it is of central importance that non-nuclear energy research is strengthened and given sufficient weight
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

compared to nuclear energy under HORIZON 2020. Furthermore, in summer, the European Commission submitted four proposals for initiatives according to Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and for five initiatives according to Article 187 TFEU. In December, general approaches were adopted by the Competitiveness Council.

In parallel to the HORIZON 2020 negotiations, additional steps were taken towards completing the European Research Area: The EU has set itself the target of realising the European Research Area (ERA) by 2014. In September, the Commission published the first ERA Progress Report, which provides an overview of the activities organised and the progress achieved by the 28 EU Member States (and some associated countries) with a view to the priorities of the European Research Area.

In 2013, conclusions of the Competitiveness Council of the EU (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space) on “EU Space Industrial Policy – Releasing the potential for economic growth in the space sector” were adopted according to which the cooperation between the European Space Agency (ESA) and the EU as well as its Member States is to be intensified. Furthermore, interim reports were adopted on the negotiations regarding the planned programme in support of the Space Surveillance and Tracking (SST) area under the Space Situational Awareness (SSA) programme. Funding of the European earth monitoring programme Copernicus was ensured by integrating Copernicus into the MFF 2014–2020 and adopting the relevant framework. Negotiations on the relevant regulation proceeded swiftly enabling the general approach for the regulation on Copernicus to be adopted by the end of the year. This regulation will govern the establishment and operation of the European earth monitoring programme Copernicus until 2020.

2.3.1.15. Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

The Stockholm Programme adopted by the European Council in December 2009 and the Action Plan implementing the Programme in 2010–2014 continued to represent an important basis for EU activities in the fields of border control, asylum and immigration policy, judicial cooperation in civil and criminal matters as well as police cooperation. As the Stockholm Programme will expire at the end of 2014, the Justice and Home Affairs Council held an orientation debate on the future development of EU policy in the fields of justice and home affairs. The priority topics will be elaborated in the first half of 2014.

In 2013, following several years of negotiations, final agreement was reached on all legal acts of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). Both the recast of the Reception Conditions Directive of 26 June (2013/33/EU), which encompasses the further harmonisation of the conditions for the reception of asylum seekers in the individual Member States, and the recast of the Asylum Procedure Directive of 26 June (2013/32/EU) aimed at further aligning
asylum procedures entered into force on 19 July and must be implemented by 20 July 2015. The recast of Regulation (EU) No. 604/2013 of 26 June (Dublin III Regulation), aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of the Dublin system of determining the Member State responsible for examining an asylum application, entered into force on 19 July and must be implemented from 1 January 2014. The recast of Regulation (EU) No. 603/2013 of 26 June (EURODAC Regulation), which is to grant law enforcement authorities access to the fingerprints of asylum seekers saved in the EURODAC database provided that strict criteria are met, also came into force on 19 July and will be applicable from 20 July 2015. Austria is among the Member States faced with the highest volume of asylum applications. During the negotiations on the Common European Asylum System, special attention was thus paid to agreeing on provisions that facilitate effective implementation by all Member States in order to increasingly prevent abuse of national asylum systems within the EU.

The illegal migration flows to Europe that tend to go hand in hand with people smuggling, human trafficking and organised crime continued to pose a major challenge. The roadmap “EU Action on Migratory Pressures – A Strategic Response”, adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council in April 2012, continued to serve as a major strategic control mechanism for the targeted implementation of measures in this field. The Action Plan was updated twice in 2013 and expanded to include the strategic priority area of preventing illegal migration from and via Southern Mediterranean countries.

Following the disaster in October when a boat with about 500 migrants sank off the coast of Lampedusa, the EU set up the Task Force Mediterranean, which was composed of representatives of the Member States, the European Commission, the European Foreign Action Service and all relevant EU Agencies. The task force’s mandate was to identify, on the basis of existing EU instruments, proposals for short-term operational actions to improve the migratory situation in the Mediterranean on the one hand, as well as medium-term initiatives for dealing with the migration pressure on the other hand. The Task Force identified five main areas of action: measures in cooperation with third countries, regional protection, resettlement and reinforced legal avenues to Europe, fight against human trafficking, smuggling and organised crime, reinforced border surveillance contributing to the protection and saving of lives of migrants, and assistance and solidarity with Member States dealing with high migration pressure. After having been presented to the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 5 December, the results of the Task Force Mediterranean were confirmed by the European Council on 19 and 20 December. The Council will monitor the implementation on a regular basis.

An important element to this end was the adoption of Regulation (EU) No. 1052/2013 of 22 October 2013 establishing the European Border Surveillance System (EUROSUR), which had been negotiated since 2011 and finally came into force on 26 November. EUROSUR is a mechanism of cooperation and
information exchange among the Member States and the European Union’s agency for external border security FRONTEX with the aim of improving surveillance of the external land and sea borders of the EU. According to this Regulation, Member States with external borders had to establish national coordination centres starting on 2 December. All other Member States, including Austria, will have to meet this obligation from 1 December 2014 onwards.

The legislative procedure regarding the legal acts on the reform of the Schengen administration was completed in October. Council Regulation (EU) No. 1053/2013 of 7 October established a more efficient evaluation and monitoring mechanism regarding the application of the Schengen acquis by the Member States. Regulation (EU) No. 1051/2013 of 22 October amended Regulation (EC) No. 562/2006 (Schengen Borders Code) for the purpose of determining a joint regulation regarding the temporary reintroduction of border controls at the EU’s internal borders in exceptional cases. The existing right of Member States to autonomously reintroduce, as a measure of last resort, temporary border control at internal borders in the event of a serious threat to their public policy or internal security was upheld. New provisions foresee that, as a measure of last resort, if all measures to mitigate persistent serious deficiencies relating to external border control identified in the context of evaluations remain ineffective, the Council, based on a proposal from the European Commission, may recommend Member States the temporary reintroduction of border controls at internal borders. Also in this case the final decision lies with the Member States concerned.

The Council still has not reached the necessary unanimity required for the adoption of a decision on the full application of the provisions of the Schengen acquis to Bulgaria and Romania.

On 28 February, the European Commission presented the Smart Borders package which primarily suggests the adoption of a regulation establishing an Entry/Exit system (EES) for registering entry and exit data of third-country nationals crossing the external borders of the Union and also a regulation facilitating easier border crossings for pre-screened travellers from third countries. In principle, Austria welcomes the establishment of systems which allow a more efficient prevention of illegal stays of third-country nationals and faster controls of frequent travellers whose eligibility for entry had already been identified in advance. However, many questions regarding details of cost/benefit aspects, technical feasibility and data protection still remain unanswered. Therefore, as a first step technical feasibility studies on the legislative proposals are carried out in 2014.

In the area of legal migration, inter-institutional negotiations on the Seasonal Workers Directive for the harmonisation of conditions of entry and stay of third-country nationals for the purpose of seasonal work were finalised. The Directive has yet to be adopted by the Council and by the European Parliament and will have to be implemented by the Member States within two and
Austria in the European Union

a half years from its entry into force. Negotiations between the Council and the European Parliament on the proposal for an ICT (Intra-Corporate Transferees) Directive governing cross-border intra-corporate transfers of employees were intensified and are expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2014. In addition, on 25 March, the European Commission submitted a proposal for a directive on entry and residence of students, researchers, pupils, remunerated and unremunerated trainees and au pairs, which aims to improve the existing provisions in the field of admission and mobility of third-party nationals for the purposes of studies or scientific research. In contrast to previous legislative acts, the proposal extends the scope of application to persons attending remunerated training courses and/or au pairs.

In the second half of the year, the Council and the European Parliament agreed on Regulation (EU) No. 1289/2013 of 11 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No. 539/2001 (Visa Code), which entered into force on 9 January 2014. The new regulation introduces a suspension mechanism to the Visa Code that allows the EU, under certain exceptional circumstances and as a measure of last resort, to temporarily suspend the visa-free travel regime towards certain third countries. Examples of such exceptional circumstances would be a sudden and substantial increase in asylum applications from third country nationals who are exempt from the visa obligations where such an increase is leading to specific pressures on the Member State’s asylum systems. Austria supports the introduction of this clause – especially with a view to the anticipated discouraging effect it might have on unfounded applications for asylum from visa-liberalised third countries.

On 1 July, the upgraded visa facilitation agreement between the EU and Moldova entered into force. It makes it easier and cheaper for journalists, NGOs and young adults from Moldova to obtain visas for short stays. Under this Agreement, holders of company ID cards do not require a visa. It is envisaged that the visa dialogue with Moldova will be finalised in 2014, including the final introduction of a visa-free travel regime for the citizens of the Republic of Moldova. Furthermore, on 1 July the upgraded visa facilitation agreement between the EU and Ukraine came into force. On 29 November, the EU signed a visa facilitation agreement with Azerbaijan, which is scheduled to enter into force simultaneously with a readmission agreement to be signed shortly. On 16 December, the EU signed a readmission agreement with Turkey, hence creating the prerequisites for starting a visa dialogue with Turkey. This dialogue is to open Turkey a long-term perspective – without any automatism – for visa exemption for Turkish nationals provided that Turkey complies with the relevant catalogue of criteria (roadmap) and ratifies and implements the signed readmission agreement.

Under the General Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM), the EU has continued its cooperation and dialogue with third countries. Joint declarations establishing mobility partnerships were signed with Morocco and Azerbaijan. Individual Member States are entitled to join these partnerships.
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

on a voluntary basis. Austria has not joined these partnerships. A mobility partnership declaration was negotiated with Tunisia and is scheduled to be signed in early 2014. Negotiations on a mobility partnership with Jordan have been prepared.

Negotiations regarding the comprehensive reform of the EU data protection rules as proposed by the Commission on 25 January 2012 were continued intensively, but a series of major aspects concerning a Data Protection Regulation aimed at defining a general EU legal framework for the processing of personal data of individuals for free movement of data within the EU and a Directive on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data for criminal prosecution purposes remained controversial. In principle, Austria is in favour of stronger Union-wide harmonisation of data privacy provisions providing for a high level of protection which offers sufficient guarantee that fundamental rights are observed.

After the Council had reached a qualified majority for a general approach on a proposal for a PNR Directive on the use of passenger name record data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime in April 2002, the European Parliament’s Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) Committee rejected the Council’s compromise proposal. Subsequently, the plenary of the European Parliament avoided a vote and referred the proposal back to the Committee where it will be discussed again, but not before 2014.

In December, the Council adopted the decision authorizing the signing of the EU-PNR Agreement with Canada which is still subject to the approval of the European Parliament. In addition, in 2013 additional rounds of negotiations on a general EU-US Data Protection Framework Agreement were held. However, hardly any progress was achieved on substantial issues.

In the area of criminal law, Directive 2013/48/EU of 22 October on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings, and on the right to have a third party informed upon deprivation of liberty entered into force on 26 November and is to be transposed by 27 November 2014. In addition, Directive 2013/40/EU of 12 August 2013 on attacks against information systems and replacing Council Framework Decision 2005/222/JHA (Cybercrime Directive) came into force on 3 September and is to be transposed by 4 September 2015.

The European Parliament and the Council reached an agreement on the European Investigation Order in criminal matters, which was co-initiated by Austria. The formal adoption will probably take place in early 2014. In addition, in December the Council approved a general approach on the Directive on the freezing and confiscation of proceeds of crime in the European Union. This Directive will probably be adopted in spring 2014. Furthermore, as a basis for negotiations with the European Parliament, the Council adopted a general approach based on a proposal for a Directive on the fight
against fraud to the Union’s financial interests by means of criminal law. On 17 June, the European Commission – together with a proposal for revision of the EUROJUST Regulation – submitted a proposal for a Regulation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office in order to combat crimes affecting the financial interests of the Union, which the European Commission upheld although a sufficient number of national parliamentary chambers had objected to the proposal in the context of a subsidiarity review. The Austrian parliament had not raised any subsidiarity concerns.

In the civil law field, Regulation (EU) No. 606/2013 of 12 June 2013 on the mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters came into force on 19 July and will take effect on 11 January 2015. In December, the Council also agreed on general approaches on the Proposal for a regulation creating a European account preservation order to facilitate cross-border debt recovery in civil and commercial matters and on the Proposal for a recast of the Brussels I Regulation (EU) No. 1215/2012 of 12 December on jurisdiction, recognition and enforcement of judgments in civil and commercial matters. The latter had become necessary due to the Agreement on a Unified Patent Court and due to a 2012 Protocol to the Agreement of 31 March 1995 establishing the Benelux Court of Justice. Regarding the most recent proposals for regulations on jurisdiction, applicable law and the recognition and enforcement of decisions in matters of matrimonial property regimes and regarding the property consequences of registered partnership, work has technically been completed but no political agreement has yet been reached.

Austria continued to be particularly active in the field of e-Justice, working intensively on improving the contents of the e-Justice Portal and in particular also on the interconnection of insolvency registers.

2.3.1.16. Culture

Under the Irish and Lithuanian EU Presidency, the Education, Youth and Culture Council met in Brussels on 17 May and 26 November. The meetings focused on completing the negotiations on the two EU programmes “Creative Europe” (2014–2020) and “Europe for Citizens” (2014–2020).

“Creative Europe” is the European Commission’s framework programme for support to the culture and creative sectors and has a budget of around 1.5 billion euros for the 2014–2020 period. The programme, which will start on 1 January 2014, has set aside funding for 250,000 artists and cultural professionals, 2,000 cinemas, 800 films and 4,500 literary translations in Europe. “Europe for Citizens” aims at promoting cross-border projects of municipalities, cities, civil society organisations raising the citizens’ awareness for their common recent history and increasing democratic engagement. The programme’s budget for the 2014–2020 period is 185.5 million euros. The results of the previous EU programme period 2007–2013 were highly positive for Austria. Under the EU “Culture” programme, 91 Austrian projects were sup-
In the field of audiovisual matters, the Council adopted conclusions on media freedom and pluralism in the digital environment in November. These conclusions are addressed to the Member States (with a view to the independence of their audiovisual regulatory authorities, transparency of media ownership, journalists’ right to protect their sources and the prevention of excessive concentration of media ownership) and to the European Commission (regarding, inter alia, projects that aim at enhancing the protection of journalists and promoting best practice as regards the transparency of media ownership). Following the adoption of the conclusions, an orientation debate on media convergence was held. Based on the Green Paper “preparing for a fully converged audiovisual world: growth, creation and values” adopted by the European Commission in April, discussions were held amongst other things on the future of the Audiovisual Media Service Directive. The focus was on discussing whether it made sense to uphold the distinction between linear and nonlinear services. Modern technology makes it possible to display and combine different electronic mass media on a single screen resulting in the borders between these services becoming increasingly blurred. The next steps to be taken by the European Commission following the public consultation on the above-mentioned Green Paper remain to be seen.

In addition, the Council discussed the continuation of the EU initiative “European Capitals of Culture” during the period 2020–2033 and agreed on a general approach. This initiative, which is highly popular among European citizens, was launched in 1985 and allows cities to present various artistic and cultural aspects to an international audience. In 2024, the capital of culture will be an Austrian city. The title of European Capital of Culture 2013 was shared by Marseille (France) and Košice (Slovakia).

The recast Directive on the return of cultural objects unlawfully removed from the territory of a Member State was also negotiated. The revised directive provides for clear improvements with a view to the directive’s low practical relevance and its limited cases of application which had been criticised by many Member States. Finalisation is scheduled for 2014.

2.3.2. The European Union’s External Relations

2.3.2.1. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) / Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), current foreign policy issues – including the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP; see Chapter 4.1) – that are of relevance for all EU Member States are dealt with at EU level. Central CFSP topics included the developments in the Arab world, especially in Syria and the Middle East, in Iran, the humanitarian
crises and conflicts in Africa, primarily in the Sahel region, Central Africa and in South Sudan. Issues regarding the Eastern Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans, such as the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina were also important topics. The EU was present worldwide with 16 civilian and military CSDP missions and operations all over the world (for further information on Austria’s participation in such operations see Chapter 4.1.1.)

On matters relating to the CFSP, decisions are generally taken unanimously (constructive abstention is possible) by the Foreign Affairs Council based on the strategic guidelines issued by the European Council; in addition, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (EU HR) issues statements on current events on behalf of the EU Member States.

The Political and Security Committee (PSC) is composed of representatives from the Member States and regularly monitors international foreign and security policy developments, supervises the implementation of agreed policies and exercises strategic direction in CFSP missions and operations.

The Council adapted existing and/or adopted new sanctions against foreign terrorist groups (Al-Qaida), Afghanistan (Taliban), Belarus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Iran, Liberia, Libya, North Korea, Zimbabwe, Somalia, Syria, Tunisia and the Central African Republic. The restrictive measures against Myanmar (Burma) were lifted (except for the arms embargo), while the measures regarding Egypt, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Côte d’Ivoire, Eritrea, Lebanon, Former Yugoslavia (Milošević), Moldova, South Sudan and Sudan remained in force without substantial changes.

At the suggestion of the EU HR, the Council may appoint EU Special Representatives (EUSR). In 2013, there were mandates for Afghanistan, the African Union (AU), the Sahel region, the Horn of Africa, Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, the South Caucasus and the conflict in Georgia, the Southern Mediterranean region, the Middle East Peace Process and Human Rights.

In 2013, the CFSP budget amounted to 356.7 million euros. The major share of these funds was used for civilian crisis management operations, the EUSRs’ activities, as well as the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

2.3.2.2. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The concept of European Neighbourhood policy (ENP) applies to the Eastern neighbouring countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine as well as the ten neighbouring countries of the EU in the Eastern and Southern Mediterranean regions, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Leba-
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

non, Libya, Morocco, Palestine/PNA, Syria and Tunisia. Belarus, Libya and Syria are included in the ENP but do not fully participate in it.

A special system of cooperation was agreed on with Russia. Under this scheme, the EU and its “key partner” Russia are developing their “strategic partnership” not within the ENP but by establishing “four Common Spaces”.

Cooperation under the ENP is based on the existing bilateral association, partnership and cooperation agreements which are to be supplemented by bilateral Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) including non-tariff measures, services, intellectual property rights, competition and public procurement, and by mobility partnerships.

The aim of the ENP is to enable the neighbouring states involved to benefit from the common area of peace, security and prosperity by defining concrete targets set out in individual multiannual Action Plans tailored to each partner country.

The thematic priorities laid down in the Action Plans include areas such as political dialogue and reform; trade, market and regulatory reforms; cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs; transport, energy, information society and the environment, as well as contact between civil societies.

For the period 2007–2013, measures launched under the ENP and the Strategic Partnership with Russia were funded based on a standardised European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). For the period 2014–2020, the European Parliament and the Council adjusted the legal framework in December and created a European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which is to replace the ENPI. Under a new incentive based approach the allocation of funds to the partner countries depends primarily on their progress in building and consolidating deep and sustainable democracy as well as in achieving the political, economic and social reform objectives agreed upon.

Under the ENP funding instrument, twinning programmes (administrative partnerships) and TAIEX (short-term expert assistance) support reform processes and institution building in the partner countries. The aim is to assist these countries in their approximation to EU standards and policies by sharing relevant expert knowledge.

As a very active and successful twinning partner in South East Europe, Austria is also interested in getting more closely involved in European Neighbourhood Policy. In 2013, Austria for the first time participated in two projects in Algeria (environmental sector and support of the Algerian foreign trade organisation). In addition, partnerships with public authorities in Georgia (fiscal reform) and Ukraine (collection and processing of electronic waste) were formed.

Austria in the European Union

(1998). Negotiations on a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) were initiated in 2013 with Morocco which also signed a mobility partnership in June. Joint stocktaking was undertaken in preparation for DCFTA negotiations with Tunisia and Jordan; preparatory talks were held with Egypt.

In the field of cooperation at programme and project level under the Southern Neighbourhood policy, against the background of the Arab Spring, special priority has been given since 2011 to funding programmes and measures that promote the building of democratic and rule-of-law structures in connection with sustainable economic development and strengthening of civil societies in the partner countries. On 8 February, the European Council presented an overall positive summary of EU support policies since the beginning of the Arab Spring and, in its conclusions, stressed that the process of democratisation initiated two years ago in the Arab world still required adequate commitment on the part of the EU in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.

Since March 2012, in addition to the bilateral cooperation approach of the ENP in the field of Southern neighbourhood policy, the EU has also held the co-chair of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), which is composed of the Southern Mediterranean states, Jordan and Mauretania, and all EU countries. The effectiveness of EU assistance for the Southern Mediterranean is to be strengthened using a two-pronged approach based on the UfM and the European Neighbourhood Policy. Within the framework of the UfM, three ministerial meetings were held on women’s rights, transport and energy.

1,500 representatives of civil society and local holders of offices and economic players from the Northern and Southern countries of the Mediterranean attended the Mediterranean Forum organised by the Anna-Lindh Foundation in cooperation with UfM in April in Marseille; at the Conference of Presidents of Parliament of the member states of the Parliamentary Assembly of the UfM and NGO representatives held in Marseille in April, Austria was represented by Barbara Prammer, President of the National Council.

Since its inception in 2009, the implementation of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) concept has contributed to developing relations between the EU and the EaP countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). On 28 and 29 November, the 3rd Eastern Partnership Summit took place in Vilnius (Lithuania). At this summit, Association Agreements with Georgia and Moldova were initialled. The objective of these Association Agreements is the political association and gradual integration into the economic area of the EU as well as the establishment of a comprehensive and deepened free trade zone. The signing of the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which had also been planned for the Summit, did not take place due to a political about-face of the Ukrainian president, resulting in severe political unrest in Ukraine.

Other important aspects of the Eastern Partnership Policy include the promotion of citizens’ mobility and visa liberalisation in a secure environment.
The EU is taking gradual steps towards full visa liberalisation as a goal for individual partner countries provided that the necessary requirements for well-managed and safe mobility are fulfilled. Visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan were signed. Action Plans for the gradual achievement of the visa liberalisation goal are being implemented with Ukraine and Moldova. Following the successful implementation of an Action Plan for the preparation of visa liberalisation by Moldova, the Commission submitted to the Council a legislative proposal to exempt Moldovan citizens from visa requirements.

2.3.2.3. Foreign Trade

The ten most important export markets for the EU in 2013 were: the USA, followed by China, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Turkey, Japan, Norway, Brazil, India and the Republic of Korea.

The ten most important export markets for Austria outside the EU were the USA, followed by Switzerland, the Russian Federation, China, Japan, Turkey, Croatia (EU member since 1 July), Brazil, the Republic of Korea and Canada.

With the objective of promoting economic growth and the creation of jobs, the EU has engaged in negotiations on bilateral Free Trade Agreements with a series of countries (e.g. with Japan, the USA or Vietnam). The EU is currently negotiating an Investment Agreement with China.

As markets outside the EU – for instance the BRICS countries and the so-called Next 11 (Egypt, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Turkey and Vietnam) – are gaining in importance, Austria launched an “internationalisation campaign”. Its aim is to increase Austrian exports to these future markets since economic growth in Asia and Latin America is considerably stronger than it is in Europe.

2.3.2.3.1. Austrian Investments

Since 1 December 2009 the European Union has, in accordance with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), been responsible for direct investments. In January, the Regulation establishing transitional arrangements for bilateral investment agreements (BITs) between Member States and third countries (“Grandfathering Regulation”) entered into force. Implementation of this EU Regulation 1219/13 is currently underway. Austria has notified all existing BITs and all BITs under negotiation to the European Commission and was authorised by the competent investigation committee to sign BITs with Nigeria and Bahrain and an amendment protocol with China. Furthermore, Austria was authorised to start negotiations with Columbia, Iraq, Côte d’Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Nicaragua, Niger, Pakistan, Qatar, Turkmenistan, Venezuela as well as Indonesia and Thailand.
Negotiations are being held on investment protection chapters in EU Agreements with Third Countries with Canada, Singapore, India, Japan, the USA and Vietnam as well as Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. New negotiation mandates for an investment agreement of the EU with China and investment protection chapters in agreements with the ASEAN countries have been granted. The legislative process for a new EU regulation regarding financial responsibility linked to investor-to-state dispute settlement, which is to determine the modalities of representation before arbitral tribunals and the appropriation of costs between the EU Member States and the Commission has been initiated and is scheduled for completion in 2014.

For Austria’s economy, both Austrian investments made abroad and foreign investments made in Austria are of importance – the latter also due to their direct impact on the Austrian labour market.

With a share of 50%, the countries in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe play a substantial albeit no longer a dominant role in the internationalisation of Austria’s economy. Roughly a decade ago, after Austria had managed to establish itself as a major investor in Central, Eastern and Southern Europe following the political changes in 1989, Austrian investors also started to pay increasing attention to other markets. As a consequence, the share of exports to transformation countries has been slightly on the decline since 2007.

In 2013, the most important target regions for Austrian investments abroad were the EU-28 countries with a share of 75.6%, followed by Asia with 10.4%. Investments in Eastern Europe accounted for 7.0%. Investments from Eastern European countries in Austria are very limited, the only exception being Russia which is the largest country of origin for foreign investments. In 2013, investments from Russia totalled 3,626 million euros, corresponding to 43.4% of overall investments (by comparison: Germany 2,132 million euros/25.5%).

Interestingly enough, at 2,592 million euros, investments from Brazil in Austria exceeded investments from the OECD countries Japan (2,411 million euros), Canada (2,024 million euros) or Sweden (2,168 million euros) in 2013.

2.3.2.4. Human Rights and Democracy
See Chapter 8.3.

2.3.2.5. Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid
See Chapters 9.3. and 12.3.1.
2.3.2.6. **EFTA/EEA and Relations to Western European Non-EU Member Countries**

Founded in 1960, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) was originally conceived as a counterweight to the European Communities. Today, it consists of the Western European Non-EU Member States Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The association primarily aims to promote economic cooperation while maintaining its member states’ full political freedom to act.

With a view to fully involving the EFTA states in the Single Market, the European Economic Area (EEA) was set up by the EU Member States and Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. The core elements of the EEA Agreement are the “four freedoms” – free movement of goods, services, capital and people. The EEA is regulated by additional protocols and flanking or horizontal policies. Agricultural and fisheries products, indirect taxes and a common external trade policy are excluded from the agreement.

The relationship between the EU and Switzerland is regulated by bilateral agreements (known as Bilateral Agreements I and II). Bilateral Agreements I include a package of seven sectorial agreements that relate mainly to mutual market liberalisation. The nine sectorial agreements known as Bilaterals II govern relations that go beyond the economic context and which inter alia pave the way towards closer cooperation between the EU and Switzerland in the fields of justice, police and asylum matters and migration. Based on the Bilaterals II package, Switzerland also participates in the Schengen area. There are also ongoing talks between the EU and Switzerland on further improving legal certainty, efficient cooperation and opportunities for closer institutional collaboration. In June, for instance, the Swiss Federal Council advocated negotiations providing for dispute resolution and legal interpretation of all agreements forming the basis of Switzerland’s participation in the Single Market by the European Court of Justice. This would require the conclusion of an institutional agreement and in December the Swiss Federal Council granted the negotiation mandate to this end. Negotiations will be carried out in 2014 and may be completed in the first half of the year.

2.3.2.7. **Relations between the EU and (Further) Third Countries**

See Chapter 3.

2.3.3. **The Enlargement of the European Union**

The renewed consensus on enlargement agreed by the December 2006 European Council continued to guide the EU’s enlargement policy. This strategy is based on the premise of the Union’s capacity to integrate new members and stresses – along with the consolidation of commitments made – the observance of a fair and at the same time rigorous conditionality. This means that
progress in the accession process, such as the granting of candidate status, is based on clearly defined criteria and may only be recognised if such objectives have been fulfilled. In the accession negotiations, the Council decisions of 2011, which give priority to the areas of justice, home affairs and fundamental rights, were applied.

On 16 October the European Commission published its annual “Enlargement Package” containing the EU’s Enlargement Strategy 2013–14 and Country Progress Reports for each enlargement country. The documents stress the enlargement policy’s stabilising effect and, referring to the EU accession of Croatia on 1 July and the progress made in Serbia, Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro, describes the EU perspective as being the central driver for reform in the Western Balkans region. Key challenges to enlargement policy were identified in the fields of economic governance, rule of law, functioning democratic structures, fundamental rights and unsolved bilateral issues.

The **Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)** is a funding mechanism for the EU pre-accession process. The beneficiary countries are candidate countries under the accession process or potential candidates under the stabilisation and association process (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Croatia until 30 June, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey). The IPA is intended as a flexible instrument and therefore provides assistance which depends on the progress made by the beneficiary countries and their needs as shown in the Commission’s evaluations and annual strategy papers. Under the financial framework for 2007–2013, the EU provided a total of approx. 11.5 billion euros for the IPA. On 1 January 2014, the IPA regulation currently in force will be replaced by the IPA II Regulation. The total IPA funding volume for the 2014–2020 period will be 11,699 billion euros. The defined objectives of IPA II include a more targeted and efficient use of funds, a more results-oriented project monitoring and a simplification of procedures.

Austria supported the pre-accession process in very concrete terms by contributing to regional cooperation and by forming **EU-Twinning partnerships**, thus assisting candidate countries in strengthening their public administrations. In the reporting period, Austria was particularly active in the areas of finance/customs and agriculture: with two projects in Croatia and one project each in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Serbia. In addition, a project in the field of judiciary and home affairs was carried out in Croatia and two projects focusing on social affairs/anti-discrimination as well as education are being implemented in Kosovo.

### 2.3.3.1. Croatia’s Accession to the EU

On 1 July, Croatia became the EU’s 28th Member State. On the same day, Neven Mimica, Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia up to that date, became European Commissioner for Consumer Protection. After almost six years of
Participation of the Austrian Parliament at European Level

negotiations, the Accession Agreement with Croatia had been signed on 9 December 2011. The ratification process was successfully completed on 21 June 2013. For Austria, Federal President Heinz Fischer ratified the treaty on 9 July 2012 in the presence of the Croatian President Ivo Josipovic. On 26 March, the European Commission presented its final monitoring report on the progress made by Croatia on its path towards EU membership. In this report, the European Commission concluded that Croatia had met all criteria for EU accession. Austria has been a supportive and reliable partner to Croatia throughout its pre-accession process and will continue to provide support during the continued reform process, for instance the further modernisation of the judiciary and the administrative system.

2.3.3.2. Turkey, Montenegro und Iceland

Following its official application for accession in 1987, accession negotiations with Turkey were opened in October 2005. Out of a total of 35 negotiation chapters, only Chapter 25 (Science and Research) has been provisionally closed so far. Another 13 chapters have been opened since 2005, most recently, in November 2013, Chapter 22 (Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments).

Turkey has been in a customs union with the EU since 1995. When several countries joined the EU in 2004 and 2007, the new EU Member States needed to be incorporated into the customs union. To that end, the Ankara Protocol, an additional protocol to the Ankara Agreement, was signed in July 2005. Turkey issued a declaration expressing its continuing non-recognition of the Republic of Cyprus and explicitly excluding Cyprus from the customs union. The EU Council has repeatedly criticized this breach of contract and in December 2006 decided to freeze negotiations on the eight relevant chapters and to refrain from provisionally concluding any of the other chapters until full implementation of the Ankara Protocol by Turkey.

While accession negotiations have thus slowed down, political developments in the common neighbourhood of the EU and Turkey highlighted the value of closer coordination. In this context, the European Commission has been pursuing a “Positive Agenda” with regard to Turkey, which has been welcomed by the Council of the EU, since 2012. In addition to intensifying the EU – Turkey dialogue on foreign policy, the Positive Agenda comprises a technical dialogue below the opening and closing of negotiation chapters.

The violent escalation of the Gezi Park protests gave rise to growing doubt regarding the Turkish reform process. When deciding to open the chapter on regional policy in June, it was thus stipulated that negotiations would not start before the European Commission has published its progress report.
In December, a Readmission Agreement was signed by the EU and Turkey and, at the same time, a dialogue on visa liberalisation was launched with Turkey.

Accession negotiations with Montenegro were opened on 29 June 2012 with special focus on the areas of rule of law, judiciary, human rights and fight against corruption and organised crime. Two chapters have already been provisionally closed and five new chapters were opened in December.

Following parliamentary elections in April, the new government of Iceland decided to suspend the accession process. Negotiations will not resume unless the Icelandic citizens decide to do so by means of a referendum.

### 2.3.3.3. The European Perspective of Further Countries in the Western Balkans

In its enlargement strategy and progress reports of 16 October, the European Commission noted that considerable progress had been made in Serbia, Kosovo and Albania. As key challenges of enlargement the European Commission identified economic governance, rule of law, the functioning of democratic structures, fundamental rights and unsolved bilateral issues. The European Commission concluded that in 2013 the enlargement policy had continued to prove a key driver for the implementation of reforms promoting stabilisation and development in the Western Balkans regions.

Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA), which strengthen the EU’s bilateral, political and economic relations with the region and are to pave the way for further reform, are already in force with Macedonia (since 2004), Albania (since 2009) and Serbia (1 September). The SSA with Bosnia and Herzegovina has been ratified but has not yet entered into force.

Albania continued essential reforms in the fields of judiciary, public administration and parliamentary rules of procedure. According to the OSCE/ODIHR, parliamentary elections in June, which resulted in a change of government, were free and fair elections. Hence, Albania has met all criteria defined by the Council for awarding candidate status. Therefore, in its progress report of October, the European Commission recommended the granting of candidate status. In December, the Council announced that this step would be taken in June 2014 provided that Albania continued its efforts in fighting corruption and organised crime.

In order for the SAA with Bosnia and Herzegovina to come into force, the EU requires Sarajevo to carry out critical political reforms. These include first and foremost a reform of the electoral system in order to achieve compliance with the European Declaration of Human Rights (implementation of the Sejdić-Finci ruling on the right of members of minorities to stand for election pronounced by the European Court of Human Rights). In addition, the country needs to set up an effective coordination mechanism for EU affairs.
Both conditions would also have to be met as prerequisites for a potential application for EU membership.

The pace at which Kosovo moves closer to the EU will depend to a great extent on the progress made by Pristina in the fields of rule of law, judiciary, public administration and establishment of a functioning market economy. Following the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations entered into by Kosovo and Serbia on 19 April, in June the European Council recommended the negotiation of an SAA with Kosovo. Negotiations were opened in October and are scheduled to be completed in spring 2014.

The opening of accession negotiations with Macedonia (candidate status since December 2005) has for many years been thwarted by the Greek-Macedonian name dispute. The European Commission has been recommending the start of accession negotiations since 2009. In December, the Council of the EU requested that Macedonia make progress in finding a solution to the naming conflict, take measures to improve good neighbourly relations and continue its reforms regarding the areas of rule of law, judiciary and fundamental rights. On the basis of another report to be presented by the European Commission in 2014, the EU Council will once again review whether the criteria for the opening of accession negotiations have been met.

Key criteria for Serbia’s approximation to the EU include visible and sustainable progress in the country’s relation to Kosovo. Following the First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalisation of Relations entered into by Serbia and Kosovo on 19 April, the European Commission found, in April, that the key criterion had been met and recommended the opening of accession negotiations. The European Council followed this recommendation on 28 June 2013 and decided to open accession negotiations in January 2014. In December, the Council of the EU confirmed the decision and adopted a framework for accession negotiations with Serbia.

2.3.4. Macro-Regional Strategies

On 22 October, the General Affairs Council, on the basis of the progress report of the European Commission of 28 June, confirmed the expediency of macro-regional strategies as instruments to improving cohesion in the EU. In December 2013, at programming level, the legal basis for the EU cohesion policy was created through the adoption of the structural funds regulations. It is now possible to carry out the programming of the seven cross-border co-operation programmes with Austria’s neighbouring countries and regions for European Territorial Co-operation. Austria will participate in the following transnational programmes: Central Europe, Alpine Space and Danube Region, for all of which the programming processes have already been launched. On the part of the European Commission, the objective is to
combine, to the greatest possible extent, macro-regional strategies with the programmes under European Territorial Co-operation.

At its meeting on 24 June 2011, the European Council gave its approval for the **EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR)**. A total of 14 riparian states of the Danube participate in the EUSDR: nine EU Member States (Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, Croatia), two Accession Countries (Serbia, Montenegro) and three third countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and Moldova). In principle, the process is open to all countries from the Danube region. The underlying Action Plan is based on four pillars, which cover twelve priority areas. Austrian institutions are actively involved in all areas and coordinate the following three priority areas: “inland waterways” is coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology/Via Donau (together with Romania), “people and skills/developing human resources” is coordinated by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection (together with Moldova), and “stepping up institutional capacity” is coordinated by the Province of Vienna (together with Slovenia). In order to ensure the appropriate national involvement and to accompany the inner-Austrian implementation of the EUSDR in an ongoing manner, the Federal Chancellery in agreement with the FMEIA set up a cooperation platform composed of representatives from the federal ministries, the federal provinces and the social partners. In its Report on the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region of 8 April, the European Commission also highlighted those positive results of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region facilitated through substantial contributions from Austria, for instance in the fields of active employment policy and the Danube Financing Dialogue and the Danube Business Forum. On 22 October, the General Affairs Council expressly appreciated the positive results of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region achieved so far. The third Annual Forum of the Danube Region Strategy will take place in Vienna from 26 to 27 June 2014.

In the **Alpine region**, Austria advocates the development of a macro-regional alpine strategy, building on the positive experience made with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region as well as existing platforms and their expertise, such as the Alpine regions (Association of Alpine States), the Alpine Convention and the EU Alpine Space Programme. As a result of the commitment of Austria and other Alpine countries and regions, the European Council of 19 and 20 December resolved to invite the European Commission to elaborate a macro-regional EU strategy for the Alpine region by June 2015. Thanks to the dedicated involvement of the regions and civil society representatives, this strategy offers new opportunities for Austria and Europe. This holds particularly true for the preservation of biodiversity and natural areas and sustainable energy resources management. This will also facilitate sustainable, socially just growth through strengthening of competitiveness, ecologi-
1.6. Mobility and Connectivity

The closure of internal borders and development of infrastructures such as transport, telecommunication, and digital connectivity are essential for the region’s development. The Alpine Convention, with its Innsbruck-based Alpine Convention Secretariat, is a key platform for the region’s development. The convention’s importance lies in the fact that it provides a framework for cooperation among the Alpine countries and the implementation of projects that promote the region’s economic and social development.

2.4. Economic and Financial Issues: European Crisis Management

The European Council of 13 and 14 December 2012 provided the framework for the continued work on the European crisis management strategy. Europe’s crisis management strategy remains clearly focused on increased solidarity and integration based on strict conditionality. The Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is to be further consolidated.

Latvia’s efforts undertaken with a view to accession to the Eurozone may be regarded as confirmation for the continued attractiveness of the Eurozone. Based on a resolution adopted by the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) on 9 July, Latvia will become a member of the Eurozone on 1 January 2014 and introduce the euro as its national currency.

2.4.1. Implementation and Strengthening of Economic Governance

The major weakness in pre-crisis economic governance consisted in the lack of systematic surveillance of macro-economic imbalances and competitiveness developments. In 2013, based on the “six-pack” reforms, which support the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact and have been in force since November 2011, the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure (MIP) was carried out for Eurozone Member States for the second time. The “two-pack” reform package, consisting of the Regulation on common provisions for monitoring and assessing draft budgetary plans and the Regulation on surveillance of Member States with serious difficulties with respect to their financial stability, entered into force on 30 May 2013. The focus of these two legal texts is on intensifying budgetary surveillance of the Eurozone Member States on the one hand and strengthening the surveillance of Member States faced with financial problems on the other. In autumn, the Eurozone Member States for the first time submitted their draft budgets in advance for assessment by the European Commission.
As planned, the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact) entered into force on 1 January and provides for the European Commission to review, after a period of 12 months following its entry into force, whether the Contracting Parties have correctly implemented the national debt brakes and automated correction mechanism as provided for in the Treaty. If necessary, the Contracting Parties may ask the Union’s Court of Justice to assess whether the measures have been correctly implemented.

### 2.4.2. Banking Union

The purpose of the banking union is to lift the close links between banking crisis and sovereign debt crisis frequently observed in the past and to prevent nations from acting unilaterally. Banking union membership is mandatory for all euro countries (18 EU Member States following the accession of Latvia in January 2014). EU countries that do not belong to the Eurozone may participate in the banking union through voluntary cooperation with the European Central Bank (ECB). In 2013, the bases for central elements of the legal framework were laid.

The Regulation establishing a Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) adopted on 3 November provides for direct ECB supervision of system-relevant banks of euro countries and in the participating non-euro countries. In November, the ECB started a comprehensive assessment (risk analysis, asset quality review and stress test) that involves some 130 credit institutions, covering approximately 85% of euro area bank assets. In this assessment, which is scheduled to take twelve months, the ECB is cooperating closely with the national supervisory authorities and the European Banking Authority (EBA).

On 11 December, the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission achieved political agreement on the EU Bank Recovery and Resolution Directive (BRRD). It governs the substantive framework conditions for all EU countries and is due to enter into force in early 2016. The Directive’s objective is to ensure that every bank, irrespective of its size and complexity, may be liquidated without jeopardising financial market stability. The most important principle is the bail-in rule according to which shareholders and creditors bear the cost of bank failure to the largest possible extent.

Based on the principles of the BRRD, the Economic and Finance Affairs Council, acting on the proposal of the European Commission of 10 July 2013, agreed on a general approach by the Council on the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) on 18 December. This approach forms the basis for the deliberations with the European Parliament. According to the draft regulation, a resolution board is to be set up whose membership is to include not only five appointed members but also a representative of each national resolution authority. In order to fund liquidations, a single resolution fund is envisaged,
exclusively funded by banks depending on risk levels. The fund’s target level is 0.8% of secured deposits, attained within a period of 10 years. The modalities are to be governed by an Intergovernmental Agreement.

On 17 December, the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission reached political agreement on the Directive on deposit-guarantee schemes (DGS). The Directive aims at achieving a uniform regulation of national deposit-guarantee systems and at facilitating fast pay-out of guaranteed deposits. On 17 July, the CRD IV package, which implements the new global bank standard (known as Basel III) by means of a regulation and a directive into EU law, entered into force.

### 2.4.3. Strengthening the Economic and Monetary Union

The European Council of 19 and 20 December reiterated the importance of employment and social developments (social dimension of the EMU) and the relevance of the use of a scoreboard of key employment and social indicators as defined in the Joint Employment Report. Furthermore the European Council advocated pressing ahead with the continuation of discussions regarding the use of employment and social indicators as proposed by the European Commission, in order to enable the use of these new instruments in the 2014 European Semester.

The European Council of 19 and 20 December deliberated possible approaches to elements of Partnerships for Growth, Jobs and Competitiveness based on a system of mutually agreed contractual arrangements and associated solidarity mechanisms. In this context, the European Council stressed that contractual arrangements needed to be mutually agreed upon. The European Council invited the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission in cooperation with the EU Member States to carry on with the work in this area and report to the European Council in October 2014.

In the context of further development of the EMU, the objective is to ensure democratic legitimacy and accountability on those levels where decisions are adopted and implemented.

### 2.4.4. Financial Assistance for Euro Area Countries (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus)

Support under the EU “rescue funding mechanisms” – the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), the European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM), the European Stability Mechanism (ESM) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – is currently being provided to Greece (since May...
Financial assistance provided in the form of loans requires recipient countries to implement economic adaptation programmes (consolidation, structural reform etc.) and/or sector-specific reform programmes (for instance in the banking sector) subject to strict conditionalities. Implementation is regularly reviewed by the lenders, a “troika” comprising the European Commission, the European Central Bank (ECB) and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Since 1 July, the ESM as a permanent mechanism has been exclusively in charge of new financial support programmes that may be needed in euro area countries.

2.4.4.1. Greece
In April and in July, the troika (Commission, ECB and IMF) completed the second and third reviews under the Second Economic Adjustment Programme for Greece. Confirmation that the reform measures to be taken under the programme were indeed carried out resulted in the disbursement of programme tranches to Greece. The fourth mission started in late September. The troika primarily reviews the country’s budgetary control with a view to achieving a primary surplus, the implementation of privatisation of public companies, the recapitalisation of banks, aspects of public administration reforms, taxation issues and structural reforms in order to promote competitiveness. At the end of the year, Greece received 133.6 billion euros made available under the second EFSF programme. These funds will be supplemented by IMF loans.

2.4.4.2. Ireland
In late 2010, Ireland requested financial assistance of 85 billion euros from the EU and the IMF. In the reporting period, the country prepared for its exit from the euro assistance programme and for its full return to the international capital markets. In November, the troika, in its twelfth and final review, confirmed that the programmes had been solidly implemented in Ireland. Ireland has made so much progress that it was the first country to successfully complete the assistance programme in December. Ireland will be subject to post-programme surveillance (PPS) until at least 75% of the financial assistance received has been repaid.

2.4.4.3. Portugal
In April 2011, Portugal requested financial assistance of 78 billion euros. The joint financing package agreed on was funded with 26 billion euros each from the EFSF, the EFSM and the IMF. In the reporting period, the seventh,

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2 The first financing package for Greece was funded through bilateral loans from the Eurozone member countries; the second package is financed from EFSF funds raised on the capital market.
Eighth, ninth and tenth reviews of the troika took place, confirming that the reform measures had been implemented. According to the tenth review, due to reforms in the public sector, the fight against tax evasion as well as the restructuring of public companies, together with improved spending control, the objective of lowering the budgetary deficit to under 5.5% was well within reach. While the banking sector was stable, access to loans was difficult. Structural reforms are also of great importance. In the reporting period, the Portuguese Constitutional Court raised several objections against measures in the field of employment and social affairs.

2.4.4.4. Spain

In July, the Eurogroup unanimously agreed on granting financial assistance of up to 100 billion euros to Spain to support the ongoing recapitalisation and restructuring of the country’s financial sector. The measures aimed at stabilising the Spanish financial sector focus on restoring access to financial markets under affordable conditions. From 2 to 13 December, the fifth and final review took place, resulting in a positive assessment of the financial sector programme. On 31 December, the ESM assistance programme expired. Spain took out loans totalling 41.3 billion euros. As in the case of Ireland, a post-programme surveillance programme will be carried out.

2.4.4.5. Cyprus

On 25 June 2012, Cyprus requested financial assistance from the EU and, since the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on 26 April, has been subject to a macro-economic adjustment programme with a programme volume of up to 10 billion euros from ESM and IMF funds. The programme’s objective is to support measures for the adequate reduction of the financial sector and measures in the fields of fiscal consolidation, structural reforms and privatisation. The first and second reviews held from 17 to 31 July and 29 October to 7 November, respectively, confirmed that the programme’s objectives were met and that the programme was successfully implemented. By the end of December, the ESM had paid out 4.6 million euros out of the total loan volume available of 9 billion euros.

2.5. Information on Europe

See Chapters 15.3 and 15.4.
3. Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

3.1. Europe

3.1.1. Austria’s Neighbourhood

3.1.1.1. South Tyrol

South Tyrol continues to enjoy special status within Austrian foreign policy. Austria’s protective function for South Tyrol, enshrined in the Treaty of Paris of 5 September 1946, is exercised in a responsible manner by the Austrian Federal Government. It is expressed in an ongoing supportive interest in the autonomy, political and general developments in South Tyrol and in regular talks between those responsible at political level in Vienna, Innsbruck and Bolzano/Bozen. At European level, the autonomy of South Tyrol serves as a model for the resolution of minority conflicts. It has become a common good shared by all three linguistic groups (German, Italian and Ladin) living in South Tyrol and as such is to be preserved and dynamically developed. For Austria, there is at the same time no doubt that from the international law point of view South Tyrol’s autonomy is also based on the right to self-determination, which as a continuing right is exercised by South Tyrol in the form of a high degree of autonomy. Austria maintains very amicable, good neighbourly relations with Italy. The common membership of Austria and Italy in the European Union has given rise to a number of additional links that are also of benefit for South Tyrol. The “European region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino” is a good example of the practical application of European instruments in the interest of regional co-operation. On 10 October, Tyrol took over the Euregio presidency for the next two years from South Tyrol.

On 24 and 25 February, parliamentary elections were held in which the Südtiroler Volkspartei (SVP) for the first time stood in an electoral alliance with the Partito Democratico (PD). It is now represented in Rome with five MPs and three senators, including an independent constitutional lawyer from the Italian group who is jointly supported by SVP and PD. A coalition formed by the South Tyrolean Greens and the Italian leftist party Sinistra Ecologia Libertà (SEL) meant that a green MP from South Tyrol for the first time became a member of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament.

The relationship between Rome and Bolzano/Bozen, which at the time of the government of experts led by PM Monti can justly be described as tense due to austerity measures that had not been agreed with Bolzano/Bozen and imposed a disproportionately high burden on South Tyrol, relaxed increasingly after PM Enrico Letta had taken office. On 1 August the Minister for Regional Affairs Graziano Delrio and Province Governor Durnwalder signed a Toponomastics Agreement (“Delrio” agreement) in Rome. Building on this agreement, negotiations will be held in order to arrive at a final solution for toponomastic signage and a termination of the legal dispute in the form of a
South Tyrolean provincial law. On 5 August, Prime Minister Enrico Letta and Province Governor Luis Durnwalder signed the “Bolzano Memorandum”, which provides for further steps towards implementing a number of issues that are important for South Tyrol. The topics range from tax-related issues to zoning and funds for municipalities. The memorandum was largely implemented in the course of the year and as of 1 January 2014 the primary legislative and administrative powers in the field of local finances and municipal taxes were for the first time transferred to Trentino-South Tyrol.

Regarding fascist relics, work was continued on the documentation centre below the Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen, which puts the monument in its historic context thus turning it into a memorial. There was, however, no progress made with respect to the Mussolini frieze on the building that houses the financial authority in Bolzano/Bozen.

Luis Durnwalder, who had shaped the destiny of South Tyrol for almost 25 years, no longer stood in the elections to the Province Parliament on 27 October. In these elections, the SVP won 45.7% and thus for the first time lost the absolute majority. It, however, continues to remain the strongest party by far with 17 seats in the Province Parliament and Arno Kompatscher as Province Governor. The Freedom Party came second (17.9%), followed by the Greens (8.7%), the Südtiroler Freiheit (7.2%), the Partito Democratico (6.7%), Forza Alto Adige (2.5%), the Movimento 5 Stelle (2.5%), the Bündnis BürgerUnion – Ladins Dolomites – Wir Südtiroler (2.1%) and L’Alto Adige nel cuore (2.1%). On 30 December, the SVP and the PD signed a coalition agreement.

There is an active exchange of visits at all levels between Austria and South Tyrol.

At the invitation of the Province Governor of Tyrol Günther Platter, the South Tyrolean Province Governor Luis Durnwalder and the Trentino Province Governor Alfredo Pacher together with Federal President Heinz Fischer participated in the event “650 Jahre Tirol bei Österreich”, celebrating the fact that Tyrol has belonged to Austria for 650 years, held in Innsbruck on 27 January. The Province Councillor for Education and Culture Sabina Kasslatter Mur met Federal Minister Claudia Schmied in Vienna on 25 May. Province Governor Günther Platter and the President of the Tyrolean Province Parliament Herwig van Staa participated in the plenary meeting of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation in Bolzano/Bozen on 29 May. On 12 June, Province Governor Luis Durnwalder participated in the screening of the film “Alles Tirol?” in Parliament in Vienna. As part of this visit, he also met the President of the Austrian National Council Barbara Prammer and State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka and was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Star for Services to the Province of Vienna by the Mayor and Province Governor of Vienna Michael Häupl. On 20 and 21 June, Federal Minister Claudia Schmied paid a visit to Bolzano/Bozen and Merano/Meran. On 10 July, Province Governor Luis Durnwalder met Federal President Heinz
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

Fischer in Vienna. The Tyrol Day, held in the context of the European Forum Alpbach set the stage for a meeting of the province governors of the European Region Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino. Alpbach was also the venue for a meeting between Federal President Heinz Fischer and the President of the South Tyrolean Association of Local Authorities Arno Kompatscher on 30 August. The Grand Order of Merit of the Province of South Tyrol was awarded to Federal Minister Claudia Schmied, Mayor and Province Governor of Vienna Michael Häupl, former Federal Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel, former Foreign Minister Peter Jankowitsch, former Province Governor Waltraud Klasnic and former Province Governor Wendelin Weingartner at Tyrol Castle on 5 April, on 30 October the decoration was awarded to Province Governor Erwin Pröll in Bolzano/Bozen. Province Councillor for Education and Culture Sabina Kasslatter Mur met the Vienna Municipal Councillor for Cultural Affairs Andreas Mailath-Pokorny in Vienna on 4 September. When Tyrol took over the presidency of the European region Tyrol – South Tyrol – Trentino from South Tyrol, the region’s three province governors and presidents of the province parliament met in Vahrn. In the context of the “650 Jahre Tirol bei Österreich” celebrations, Province Governor Luis Durnwalder paid another visit to Vienna, while Province Councillor for Education and Culture Sabina Kasslatter Mur was awarded the Grand Decoration of Honour for Services to the Republic of Austria by Federal Minister Claudia Schmied on 13 November in the Austrian capital, where she also met Federal President Heinz Fischer. Province Governor Durnwalder was awarded the “Ring des Landes Tirol” (ring of the Province of Tyrol) in Innsbruck on 14 November.

In 2013, the budget of the Province of South Tyrol amounted to 5.124 billion euros. Economic growth registered a slight decline of 0.1 % and the inflation rate stood at 1.9 %. In 2013, South Tyrol’s exports increased by 4.8 % while imports declined by 3.8 % and the unemployment rate reached 4.4 %.

3.1.1.2. Austria’s Neighbours

3.1.1.2.1. Germany

In the parliamentary elections to the German Bundestag, held on 22 September, the CDU and CSU together succeeded in reaching 41.5 %, thus not only winning the majority of the votes but also gaining substantial support. Also winning additional votes, the SPD remained the second-strongest power in the country with 25.7 % while the Left and the Greens attained 8.6 % and 8.4 % respectively. The FDP that had formed part of the government coalition missed the 5 % threshold and is thus no longer represented in the Bundestag.

After parallel exploratory discussions with the Bündnis 90/Die Grünen had failed, the CDU/CSU started coalition negotiations with the SPD. The SPD for the first time invited all its members to vote on the coalition agreement, which was approved by the party base with a three-quarter majority. On 17
Europe

December, Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel was confirmed in office by the Bundestag and the cabinet “Merkel III” was sworn in.

At the elections to the state parliament in Lower Saxony, the Christian-Liberal coalition was voted out of office and replaced by a red-green alliance. From January 2014 on, Hessen will be governed by a coalition of CDU and Greens, which replaces the previous CDU-FDP government. In Bavaria, the CSU won the absolute majority of seats and will thus – after five years of coalition with the FDP – again govern alone.

Following the elections, the most important topic on Germany’s domestic agenda remains the course to be taken in gradually managing the impact of the economic and financial crisis in the Eurozone, which is also the most important element in the new federal government’s coalition programme.

European integration will remain an essential political priority on the new federal government’s agenda. Multilateralism plays a highly relevant role in German foreign policy, and the country attaches much importance to its commitments in the G8, the G20, and in the field of international climate protection policy (the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change is based in Bonn) and in NATO.

A significant role is attached to bilateral relations with France and Poland, and joint initiatives continue to be launched with these two countries. Although positions on substantive issues – such as the US surveillance programmes – diverge, the USA remains Germany’s most important partner outside of Europe. Russia is an important strategic partner, especially in the field of energy issues.

Austria and Germany enjoy excellent bilateral relations at political, economic and social levels, and the large number of close good neighbourly links at all levels (federal, state and municipal) make their relationship quite unique.

The gradual nuclear power phase out that Germany has been implementing since 2011 has led to a considerable convergence of the German and Austrian positions on nuclear power.

With a share of 30.1% in Austria’s international exports, Germany remains the most important trading partner, although Austrian exports to its neighbouring country have declined. In the field of direct investments Germany is the most important target country for Austrian companies, while it is in turn the largest direct investor in Austria. The country also plays a key role for the Austrian tourist industry as every second visitor to Austria still comes from Germany.

3.1.1.2.2. Italy

Due to the fact that the protest party “Movimento 5 Stelle” succeeded in attaining approx. 25% and Silvio Berlusconi’s centre-right alliance did unexpectedly well, the centre left alliance – contrary to all forecasts – only
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

scored a very narrow victory a the parliamentary elections on 24 and 25 February. Thanks to the huge majority bonus, the centre-left alliance was able to secure the absolute majority in the Chamber of Deputies with a share of 54% seats. In the Senate, however, none of the alliances attained an absolute majority. The government formation process was completed only after the presidential elections in which the incumbent President Giorgio Napolitano was Italy’s first Head of State to be re-elected for a second term in office on 20 April. On 28 April, the new government led by Prime Minister Enrico Letta (Partito Democratico/PD) was sworn in. After 20 years this is the first time that a “grand coalition” of centre-left (PD) and centre-right (Popolo della Libertà/PDL) involving the centrist block around Scelta Civica has been formed. Against the background of a persistent recession and high unemployment rates, the government has attached top priority to stimulating economic growth, job creation and institutional reform while at the same time observing the EU deficit threshold. Following the split of the PDL, the government’s majority in parliament shrank which led PM Enrico Letta to submit to a vote of confidence on 11 December, which he won.

Italy’s foreign policy has traditionally been guided by multilateralism and attaches particular importance to cooperation within the EU to which Italy, as a founding member, is especially committed also under the new government. Apart from supporting a further deepening in the fields of economic policy coordination (in exchange for greater solidarity), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), immigration and asylum issues, Italy also advocates enlargement, especially towards the South European countries but also towards Turkey.

In this context, Italy considers regional cooperation under the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative (AII) as an important vehicle in the pre-accession process for the Western Balkan countries. With respect to the AII, Italy is among the leading supporters of developing a strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian region at EU level by 2014. Like Austria, the country is also open towards the development of a strategy for the Alpine region.

Further priorities on Italy’s foreign policy agenda are the entire Mediterranean region from North Africa to the Middle East and trans-Atlantic relations. Participation in peacekeeping missions also plays a highly relevant role in the context of Italy’s international identity and commitment. A thematic priority that is shared by Italy and Austria is the protection of human rights: like Austria, Italy is a member of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) for the period 2011–2014.

The excellent and intensive bilateral relations are characterised by a very active exchange of visits between Austria and Italy, intense economic relations and mutual tourism. Italy remains Austria’s second largest trading partner; trade relations with the Northern Italian regions are particularly close. The majority of the approximately 300 subsidiaries of Austrian companies in
Italy are also located in the north of the country. For Austrian holidaymakers, Italy is still the unrivalled number one holiday destination, which is reflected in about 1.9 million trips and 10.9 million overnight stays annually.

3.1.1.2.3. Liechtenstein

The elections to the Landtag (parliament) held on 3 February brought losses for the two traditional parties, the Fortschrittliche Bürgerpartei (FBP, the Progressive Citizens’ Party) and the Vaterländische Union (VU, the Patriotic Union). Together with the Freien Liste (Free List) and Die Unabhängigen (The Independents) there are now four parties represented in the principality’s parliament. On 27 March, Adrian Hasler (FBP) was sworn in as Head of Government. Holding 18 out of the 25 seats in the Landtag, the FBP-VU coalition government has a stable majority.

Against the background of the economic and financial crisis whose impacts are also felt in Liechtenstein as a financial centre, the government has attached top priority to budget consolidation which also included the adoption of a third package of relevant measures in July.

The bilateral tax agreement on the taxation of income from capital assets invested in Liechtenstein and/or held on Liechtenstein accounts was signed on 29 January. The agreement provides for the transparent determination and a 25% taxation of such income. In its government declaration of 14 November, Liechtenstein committed itself proactively to the automatic exchange of information on tax matters.

In its priority-oriented foreign policy, the country pursues the goals of safeguarding Liechtenstein’s sovereignty and independence within secure borders and positions itself in Europe and the world as a reliable and committed partner who values solidarity. In this context, Liechtenstein’s membership of the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, the EFTA, the EEA and the WTO play a prominent role.

Austria and Liechtenstein can look back on a long history of bilateral relations which are particularly intense and close. Regular visits are paid at high and highest levels; at the same time there is an ongoing exchange at expert level. Cooperation is especially close in the fields of business, culture, education, social affairs and justice as well as on foreign and security policy issues. There is agreement and mutual support between Austria and Liechtenstein on a large number of issues, also at multilateral level. Regional cooperation between the two neighbours is highly dynamic.

3.1.1.2.4. Switzerland

In a referendum held on 22 September, the Swiss public decided against the abolition of compulsory military service and the introduction of a voluntary army. On 24 September, 65.3% of voters rejected the 1:12 wage initiative
(i.e. limiting the highest salary in a company to twelve times the lowest) submitted by the Socialist Youth and the trade unions as well as an increase in the motorway toll. In the canton of Ticino, the adoption of an initiative introducing a ban on full-face veils into the cantonal constitution (65.4%) caused quite a stir.

At foreign policy level, Switzerland primarily focused on its relations with neighbouring countries, the EU and other important non-EU countries (USA, BRIC states, Western Balkans) as well as on global issues. In this context, financial and tax issues played an especially relevant role. On 1 January, the withholding tax agreement concluded with Austria entered into force, on 14 February a Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) agreement was signed with the USA, and in December the Swiss Bundesrat (Federal Council) adopted a mandate for launching negotiations on revising the savings tax agreement with the EU.

Switzerland remained highly committed to peace policy, conflict mediation and human security as issues of global importance; funding for sustainable development policy was increased. In the UN context, Switzerland played an active role inter alia in the Human Rights Council (HRC), with respect to the reform of the UNSC, and regarding the adoption of an international instrument in the field of small arms and light weapons.

Foreign trade, neutrality and strengthening the position of Geneva as a UN headquarters traditionally play an important role. A bilateral free trade agreement was signed with China on 6 July.

Switzerland maintains close relations with the EU which are based on the two pillars of bilateral agreements and autonomous adaptation. There are some 120 bilateral agreements. As regards new bilateral agreements, the EU expects Switzerland to provide solutions to institutional issues, for both existing and future agreements. On 21 August, the government adopted a draft for a negotiation mandate which was also adopted by parliament and cantons at the end of the year.

Bilateral relations with Austria are characterised by a tightly-knit set of treaties, sustainable cooperation in many areas and the traditionally frequent exchange of visits at all levels. Some 60,000 Austrians reside permanently in Switzerland and about 8,000 commute across the Austro-Swiss border. Switzerland is Austria’s third largest trading partner and an important consumer of Austrian services. Swiss nationals make up the third largest group of tourists in Austria. In November, Austria and Switzerland signed a cooperation agreement on the global sustainable use of mountain areas.

3.1.1.2.5. Slovakia

Austria and Slovakia maintain very intensive and friendly relations at all levels. Several events were organised to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations on 1 January 1993. A study on “20
years bilateral relations Austria-Slovakia”, prepared on the initiative of the Austrian Embassy in Bratislava and in cooperation with the Slovak think-tank “Slovak Foreign Policy Association” (SFPA) was presented at panel discussions held in several cities in Slovakia and in Vienna.

There was a very active bilateral exchange of visits also at the highest level. In January and in November, Prime Minister Robert Fico met Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann for consultations in Vienna. Federal President Heinz Fischer paid an informal visit to his counterpart Ivan Gašparovič on 15 November and participated in the meeting of Central European Presidents that took place at the invitation of President Gašparovič on 12 and 13 June in Bratislava. In October, the new premises of the Austrian Cultural Forum Bratislava were officially opened in the presence of the two state secretaries Reinhold Lopatka and Peter Javorčík.

Košice was European Capital of Culture 2013. Austria also participated in the programme by contributing several highly prominent projects including the cultural pavilion White Noise.

Bilateral economic relations have continued to develop dynamically. After the Netherlands and ahead of Germany, Austria is the second largest foreign investor in Slovakia. More than 2,000 Austrian companies are active in the country, employing some 40,000 local staff. In turn, a large number of Slovaks work in the Austrian health care sector; about 25,000 caregivers – i.e. two thirds of all care assistants employed in Austria – come from Slovakia. Currently, Austria is Slovakia’s only neighbouring country in the Eurozone, and consequently the two countries share a common interest in many European issues.

The development of bilateral transport infrastructure, especially along the border section that runs along the river March, continues to rank high on the bilateral agenda.

In the energy sector, cooperation in the fields of supply security of gas and oil is of strategic importance. Diversification of supply routes and sources as well as the development of cross-border infrastructure play a pivotal role in this context. As regards the plans for building a new nuclear power plant in Jaslovské Bohunice and the resumption of building activities for reactor units 3 and 4 in the Mochovce nuclear power plant, Austria again reiterated its legitimate safety concerns.

3.1.1.2.6. Slovenia

A vote of no confidence against the conservative Prime Minister Janez Janša led to a change of government in Slovenia. The new coalition government formed by opposition leader Alenka Bratušek was confirmed by parliament on 20 March and attaches top priority to managing the impacts of the economic and financial crisis.
The economically and politically very close and intensive bilateral relations between Austria and Slovenia, which are also characterised by a range of common interests within the EU and a broad convergence of interests in South East Europe, were further developed. The quadrilateral dialogue between the foreign ministries of Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and Liechtenstein was further intensified.

**Trilateral cooperation** – involving the new EU member Croatia – has also gathered momentum at top political level. At the invitation of Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann, a trilateral meeting at Heads of Government level was held in Graz on 23 August. A first common meeting of the three Heads of State is planned for 2014 and will be hosted by Federal President Heinz Fischer.

The historic compromise achieved in resolving the issue of bilingual topographical signs in Carinthia in 2011 has contributed towards strengthening the bilateral basis of trust. The new Carinthian province government – elected in March – declared its commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity in Carinthia and to promoting co-existence of the German-speaking and the Slovenian-speaking ethnic groups based on equal rights in its government programme for 2013–2018; the Slovenian government took positive note of the approach pursued by the new province government.

The official recognition of the **German-speaking ethnic group as a minority in Slovenia** is an important concern for Austria and is regularly addressed in bilateral contacts. The joint visit paid by Federal President Heinz Fischer and President Borut Pahor to representatives of cultural associations operated by the German-speaking ethnic group in Kočevje (Gottschee) on 1 September is particularly noteworthy in this context.

Austria is highly interested in a rapid and final processing of the (approximately 200) **denationalisation cases** involving Austrian nationals by Slovenian authorities and courts.

**Economic aspects** are a very relevant factor of bilateral relations. With a share of 48% of all foreign direct investments, Austria is still the largest foreign investor in Slovenia while Slovenian citizens are the most important per capita consumers (approx. 1.150 euros) of Austrian products.

At the **third meeting** of the Austrian-Slovenian **Joint Commission for Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science** held in Vienna on 16 and 17 December, a new cultural work programme was adopted for the years 2014 to 2016.

### 3.1.1.2.7. Czech Republic

In the Czech Republic, the year 2013 was marked by **turbulence in domestic politics**. Following the resignation of the rightist coalition led by Prime Minister Petr Nečas in June, President Miloš Zeman installed an experts’ government led by Prime Minister Jiří Rusnok. In August, however, this government
Europe

lost a vote of confidence and early elections to the Chamber of Deputies were held on 25 and 26 October, which resulted in a substantial weakening of the former governing parties. With a view to forming a new government, coalition talks were launched between the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD), the economic-liberal party “ANO 2011” and the Christian Democrats (KDU-ČSL), which were still ongoing at the end of the year.

On 23 April – shortly after having taken office – the newly elected President of State Miloš Zeman was welcomed by Federal President Heinz Fischer on an official visit paid to Austria. On 18 October, the two Heads of State went to Český Krumlov and Freistadt and jointly visited the first cross-border provincial exhibition organised by the two provinces of Upper Austria and South Moravia. The exhibition (“Alte Spuren – neue Wege”, Old Traces – New Paths) was held in Freistadt, Bad Leonfelden, Český Krumlov and Vyšší Brod from April to November.

Bilateral relations between Austria and the Czech Republic have never been better. As the focus is on commonalities, formerly problematic themes are clearly receiving less attention. However, issues related to the use of nuclear energy and – to a lesser extent – certain issues related to the immediate post-war period, remain sensitive topics that require continued objective handling.

The Czech Republic is still Austria’s most important trading and economic partner in Central and Eastern Europe. The considerable trade volume and the high volume of Austrian investment in the Czech Republic go to show how closely the two economies are interlinked. Recently, however, Austrian exports to the Czech Republic experienced a decline while Austrian imports from the Czech Republic were on the rise.

The swift development of bilateral transport infrastructure, especially the sections Brno–Vienna and Prague–Linz, remains a priority for both countries.

At regional authority level, relations have been further strengthened by the increasing intensity of cross-border cooperation between the Czech regions and the federal provinces of Lower Austria, Upper Austria and Vienna within the three existing European Regions (Bavarian Forest-Bohemian Forest-Šumavá, Weinviertel-South Moravia-West Slovakia and Silva Nortica). The key funding instrument for many areas of cooperation was the programme “European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Austria – Czech Republic, 2007–2013”.

With respect to energy policy, Austria strives to establish a comprehensive energy dialogue on sustainable energy supply. Regarding the envisaged expansion of the Temelin NPP by two additional reactor units (3 and 4), the cross-border environmental impact assessment (EIA) procedure was concluded and the EIA position adopted on 18 January. Austria now focuses on representing legitimate and legally founded Austrian interests in the subsequent approval procedure. A very important aspect in this connection is
the planning of possible permanent repositories where Austria’s interests are also consistent with the security requirements of the Czech population. Another very topical issue in this context is Austria’s demand that access to Czech courts by Austrian legal subjects be explicitly stipulated in Czech EIA legislation.

The mandate of the Permanent Conference of Austrian and Czech Historians, set up in 2009, was extended on 18 November in a meeting between Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Michael Spindelegger and Czech Foreign Minister Jan Kohout. The conference’s working mechanism was also rendered more flexible by enabling the project-related involvement of other experts. The preparation of a common history book dealing with the events of the 19th and 20th century is the largest project being worked on by the conference.

3.1.1.2.8. Hungary

The tense relationship between Hungary and the European institutions eased after the country had taken account of several objections raised by adopting a “Fifth Amendment to the Constitution”. On 25 June, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (CoE) decided to refrain from opening a monitoring procedure against Hungary. Nevertheless, several aspects that were criticised by the Parliamentarian Assembly such as independence of the judiciary, freedom of the media, fundamental rights and religious freedom, as well as substantial concerns raised by the Venice Commission against the constitutional amendments, remained unresolved. The dialogue between the CoE and the Venice Commission with the Hungarian authorities is being continued. Hungary also cooperates with the CoE on issues relating to discrimination of members of the Roma minority; at the invitation of the Hungarian government, the CoE’s Committee of Experts on Roma Issues paid a thematic visit to Hungary in September focused on combating anti-Ziganism, hate speech and hate crimes.

Apart from stabilising the Forint, Hungary succeeded in sustainably reducing the budget deficit below 3%. On 21 June, the EU deficit procedure that had been ongoing since 2004 was closed.

The relations between Austria and Hungary are intensive and of high quality, which is also reflected in regular high-level contacts at political level. The Hungarian President János Áder, for instance, participated on 5 May in the opening of the re-designed Mauthausen memorial and Prime Minister Viktor Orbán visited Austria on 20 June.

Hungary declared 2013 “Central European Year”, as it held both the Presidency of the Central European Initiative (CEI) and in the second half of the year also took over the Presidency of the Visegrád Group. There was close cooperation, coordination and alignment of content with Austria that will take over the CEI Presidency from Hungary.
Europe

The two neighbours, Austria and Hungary, are important business partners, which safeguards thousands of jobs in both countries. With a volume of 9.1 billion euros, Austria is currently the fourth largest investor in Hungary. In spite of the economic crisis, bilateral trade has recovered and reached pre-crisis levels.

Although many Austrian companies are doing very well in Hungary, some sectors are facing problems. The important role a predictable and secure investment climate plays for Austria’s economic presence in Hungary has therefore been a recurring topic in bilateral discussions.

Austria maintains intensive contacts with Hungary, also at the level of experts. Regular consultations are, for instance, held in the context of the two countries’ foreign ministries bilateral working group. Cooperation at regional level was also further intensified. Austria and Hungary jointly contribute pro-actively to regional cooperation programmes, for instance within the European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) or the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI). The Regional Coordination Forum Austria-Hungary, which was set up in 2005, is dedicated to dealing with regional topics of immediate relevance.

Cross-border infrastructure was further improved. As a result of the gradual dismantling of former border facilities as last remaining symbols of the separation of Europe, the border region is increasingly becoming an area where people come together.

Former Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn died on 19 June. In his capacity as Foreign Minister, Horn together with his Austrian counterpart Alois Mock cut the barbed wire fence established during the Cold War along the Austro-Hungarian border in a symbolic act in summer 1989.

The 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Hungarian honorary consulate in Graz was celebrated on 18 September in the presence of state secretaries Reinhold Lopatka and Gergely Pröhle.

Austria is involved in the preparations for the Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014 and is contributing to four bilateral projects in this context.

3.1.1.3. South East Europe / Western Balkan Countries

3.1.1.3.1. Albania

At domestic policy level, the parliamentary elections held in Albania on 23 June were a major event in which the left camp scored a landslide victory. Winning 85 of the 140 seats, it was able to secure a qualified majority in parliament. Edi Rama, chairman of the Socialist Party (PS), replaced the chairman of the Democratic Party (PD) Sali Berisha as Prime Minister. Within the left alliance the actual winner of the elections was the Socialist Movement for Integration. It was able to increase its share in parliamentary seats from 4 to 18 and its chairman, Ilir Meta, was elected Speaker of Parliament.
In October, the European Commission (EC) recommended awarding EU candidate status to Albania. In December, the EU Council held out the concrete prospect of this step to Albania for June 2014. In this connection, the Council of the EU continued to call for a pro-active approach towards fighting corruption and organised crime.

The government’s decision to refuse the USA’s request regarding the destruction of chemical weapons from Syria on Albanian territory was accompanied by protests, especially by young people.

A credit agreement for over 300 million euros was agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Austria maintains intensive political, economic and cultural links with Albania. Austria is also one of the most important advocates of Albania’s rapid rapprochement to the EU.

3.1.1.3.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

In June, people’s frustration about the inactivity of those responsible at political level was articulated in large-scale peaceful demonstrations in front of the Parliament building in Sarajevo and in other large cities, which, however, did not lead to the formation of a lasting protest movement. People took to the streets in June because authorities had for months ceased to issue civil status documents and IDs for new-born children because of lack of agreement on the relevant amendment to the law.

The first census since 1991 was held in October and – in spite of the political atmosphere – was not affected by major or systemic irregularities.

Although Euro-Atlantic integration continues to be the main foreign policy priority and the EU has since 2012 held a high-level dialogue on the accession process with Bosnia and Herzegovina, it was impossible to add momentum to the process of political stagnation. Despite intensive mediation efforts on the part of the EU, the provisions for filing a credible EU membership application as laid down in the roadmap (implementation of the Sejdic/Finci ruling passed by the European Court of Human Rights, agreement on an efficient EU coordination mechanism) have not been implemented. Consequently, funding foreseen for Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) in 2013 was reduced by more than a half.

Since 2009, the position of High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (HR) has been held by the Austrian Valentin Inzko. Ambassador Inzko briefed the UNSC in May and November on the situation in the country.

In October, the EU confirmed its readiness to continue the CSDP operation for the stabilisation of Bosnia and Herzegovina EUFOR Althea with an executive mandate, which was extended in November by the UNSC by another year. The mission’s focus is on capacity building and training. With about 200 personnel, Austria is still the largest provider of troops to the mission.
Europe

that has been under Austrian command since the end of 2009. The mandate of Major-General Dieter Heidecker as Commander of EUFOR Althea was extended by another year in December.

Austria’s position as largest investor and most important trading partner contributes towards promoting the high economic policy profile Austria enjoys in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.1.1.3.3. Kosovo

The local elections held on 3 November and 1 December were the first to be held on the entire national territory (including North Kosovo). The otherwise peaceful and fair conduct of these elections was overshadowed by violent attacks on three polling stations in north Mitrovica, where elections were repeated on 17 November accompanied by massive security and safety precautions put in place by the European Union Rule of Law Mission in (EULEX) and the NATO/PfP operation Kosovo Force (KFOR). The runoff elections were conducted on 1 December and resulted in numerous shifts of power at municipal and local government level. The assessment of the election process by the EU Election Observation Mission to Kosovo was generally positive.

The national sovereignty of Kosovo, which has been independent since 2008, has not yet been recognised by all states (including five EU Member States). Kosovo thus continues to work towards international recognition and membership in international organisations. The most important foreign policy goal is gradual rapprochement to the EU and visa liberalisation with the EU Schengen area. Negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU were opened on 28 October.

With a view to normalising relations between Serbia – which does not recognise the independence of its former province – and Kosovo, negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina were launched in 2011. A first agreement in principal – mediated by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – was reached under the "First agreement of principles governing the normalization of relations" signed on 19 April. So far, joint controls on all six border crossings between Serbia and Kosovo have been implemented, customs duties are being levied at the border crossings in North Kosovo, a fund for the North has been set up, liaison offices were opened in Pristina and Belgrade and agreements have been reached in the fields of telecommunications and energy. Towards the end of the year, particular focus was placed on the establishment of an association of Serb-majority municipalities and the integration of the former Serbian parallel structures (police forces, judicial authorities) in national Kosovar structures. The prerequisite for that was the passing of the amnesty law by Kosovo’s parliament on 11 July. A regional police commander for the four Serbian municipalities in the North has been appointed. Furthermore, the prime ministers
have committed themselves to not blocking one another with regard to their respective processes of rapprochement with the EU.

After the end of the international supervision, international organisations are still strongly present in Kosovo and support the young state in the fields of institution building, good governance, the rule of law and economic development.

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) assists the Kosovar institutions in building up a functioning legal, police, customs and judicial system. It is the largest CSDP mission to date. Austria seconded 12 police officers and one diplomat as head of staff to EULEX Kosovo. The UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) set up in line with UNSC resolution 1244 (1999) reduced its presence by handing over competences to Kosovar institutions. However, in the context of the non-recognition of Kosovo it still continues to play a role in certain international fora and is mainly active in North Kosovo.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo is the organisation’s largest mission with some 600 staff and focuses on democratic institution building, human rights and local self-administration.

The military mission KFOR, which was also established by UNSC resolution 1244 (1999), is an important factor in guaranteeing safety, security and stability. Since June 2009, the operation’s forces have gradually been reduced and by the end of the year some 4,900 troops were located in Kosovo. Austria contributes approximately 400 soldiers and is thus the largest non-NATO contributor. KFOR supports EULEX Kosovo and the Kosovar police forces in maintaining a stable, safe and secure environment and ensuring free movement in Kosovo.

Austria maintains excellent bilateral relations with Kosovo. The quality of relations is also reflected in the high frequency of bilateral visits, the strong Austrian presence in Kosovo and the constant expansion of Austrian trade relations. Development cooperation plays an essential role in the relations between both countries.

3.1.1.3.4. Macedonia

The country’s domestic policy development was severely compromised by a protracted crisis that was triggered by the budget debate in parliament on 24 December and went on for several months. The resulting dispute between governing and opposition parties was, however, largely defused thanks to mediation by the EC and Members of the EP.

In its progress report of 16 October, the Commission for the fifth time recommended opening accession negotiations with Macedonia (candidate status since 2005). The unanimity required for such a decision was, however, again thwarted by objections raised by several EU Member States (led by Greece), which make an agreement on the Greek-Macedonian name dispute and the improvement of good neighbourly relations a prerequisite. Greece fears that
the name “Macedonia” may lead to territorial claims involving the neighbouring northern Greece region of the same name. Talks led by UNSG’s Personal Envoy Matthew Nimetz have as yet failed to produce any results. Together with a group of like-minded EU Member States, Austria supported opening accession negotiations with Macedonia. Austria is at the same time one of the country’s most important economic partners and is the second largest foreign investor in Macedonia.

3.1.1.3.5. Montenegro

The most important domestic policy event was the presidential elections held on 7 April. These elections, in which incumbent Filip Vujanović scored an extremely narrow victory over the candidate of the Democratic Front, Miodrag Lekić, even led to temporary boycotts of parliamentary work by the opposition. Montenegro made further headway on its Euro-Atlantic integration course. After Montenegro had completed the necessary preliminary work, the EU opened negotiations on the important Chapters 23 (judiciary and fundamental rights) and 24 (justice, freedom and security) on 18 December. The areas of independent judiciary and human rights are still the major challenges being faced by Montenegro. The country is also a NATO accession candidate and has striven to receive an invitation to join NATO for 2014.

Constructive neighbourhood policy and regional cooperation continue to form the pillars of Montenegrin foreign policy. Montenegro maintains very good relations with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Croatia. In spite of undeniable irritations in linguistic and ecclesiastical matters as well as with respect to Kosovo, relations with Serbia have clearly improved. Visits by President Tomislav Nikolić and Head of Government Ivica Dačić to Montenegro as well as by Prime Minister Milo Đukanović to Serbia underline the mutual wish for a normalisation of relations.

Relations between Austria and Montenegro are very close on all levels. Austria supports the Montenegrin accession process with a number of bilateral projects and mainly in the context of EU twinning projects. Austrian companies are still among the largest investors in Montenegro. Due to the economic crisis and the still ambivalent investment climate, however, flows of trade and direct investments have registered a decline.

3.1.1.3.6. Serbia

As strongest party, the national-conservative Serbian Progressive Party (SNS), which emerged from the former Radical Party, has since 2012 dominated the coalition government led by Prime Minster Ivica Dačić (SPS) and succeeded in further increasing its political influence. In July, the party that had until then been the third coalition partner, the United Regions of Serbia (URS)
led by Mladjan Dinkić, left the government, which meant that responsibility for the Ministry of Finance and Economy was transferred to the SNS. Under pressure exercised by the SNS, the chairman of the largest opposition party Democratic Party (DS), Dragan Djilas, was ousted as mayor of Belgrade. Until new elections are held, the City of Belgrade is led by a temporary administration.

The government has consistently pursued its course of rapprochement with the EU and thus the European Council decided in December to open accession negotiations with Serbia on 21 January 2014. The most important prerequisite for this step was continued normalisation of relations with Kosovo (see Chapter 3.1.1.3.3.).

Another condition sine qua non for a successful rapprochement with the EU is the consistent continuation of political reform with a special focus being placed on the judiciary, including the fight against corruption and organised crime. The screening process for the related EU Negotiation Chapters 23 and 24 (judiciary and fundamental rights; justice, freedom and security) was opened on 25 September.

At foreign policy level, Serbia continued to pursue its active neighbourhood policy. After the election of former nationalist Tomislav Nikolić as Serbian President in 2012 had given rise to scepticism particularly in Croatia, an intensive exchange of visits (visit by the Croatian President in October) led to a clear easing of the situation. The fact that President Tomislav Nikolić apologized for the crimes committed by Serbs in Srebrenica contributed to a noticeable improvement of relations, especially with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from rapprochement with the EU and regional reconciliation, Serbia also attached importance to maintaining the traditionally close relations with Russia. This holds particularly true in connection with the construction of the South Stream gas pipeline, the ground-breaking ceremony for which was held in Serbia in November.

While rapprochement with the EU is making progress, the economic situation is still precarious: although Serbia’s GDP registered a slight increase of some 1.5 %, this is tantamount to stagnation considering the recession the country found itself in and the lacklustre outlook for 2014. Unemployment remains at about 25 % and the net monthly average wage at approx. 400 euros. Consequently, people’s primary concern is raising their standard of living. The yardstick thus applied for measuring the government’s success will be improvement in the economic situation – notwithstanding the progress it makes in the field of approximation with the EU.

Relations between Austria and Serbia are based on an intensive political, economic and cultural partnership. Austria is not only the largest foreign investor but also one of the most important supporters of Serbia’s rapprochement with the EU.
3.1.2. Turkey

The central topics at domestic policy level were the Kurdish issue, the position of the military in the state’s organisational structure and in politics, the rule of law and human rights issues, especially in the areas of freedom of religion and freedom of the press. The year was marked by special efforts undertaken in the fields of constitutional reform, judicial reform and intensified efforts towards resolving the Kurdish issue. Nation-wide protests (“Gezi Park”) against the environmental and social policy pursued by the AKP government as well as massive allegations of corruption against the government and/or its environment led to reshuffles at ministerial level and major upheaval in the country’s police and administrative services, triggering national and international criticism with respect to the Turkish approach towards democracy and the rule of law. Despite progress on issues relating to the restitution of property to religious minorities and the re-opening of churches and efforts towards interreligious dialogue, there remains the need for further reforms.

Turkey’s geo-strategic position at the interface between the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe requires an increasingly multipolar focus of its foreign policy and enhanced commitment within the multi-lateral framework. The special relations between Turkey and the states of the Caucasus region and Central Asia are based on linguistic and cultural commonalities. Turkey assumes a bridging function between the region’s energy reserves and the energy markets in Europe and is an interface for the latter’s supply security.

Apart from the EU rapprochement process (1963 Association Agreement, 1995 customs union, 1999 accession candidate status, 2005 start of accession negotiations), Turkey, which has been a member of the Council of Europe since 1949 and of NATO since 1952, is closely integrated in European and/or western structures. After three and a half years, a new EU Negotiation Chapter (Chapter 22: regional policy) was opened in November. On 16 December, Turkey signed the readmission agreement to launch the visa dialogue. Although the country’s general EU orientation is not in question, the AKP government’s EU commitment has somewhat attenuated over the last few years.

The transformations in the Arab region have led to intensified political and economic relations with some of the countries in the region while tensions in relations with the Iraqi central government in Baghdad and with Israel continued. The situation in Syria is a challenge for Turkey, also because of the associated influx of refugees.

The Balkans are a zone of historic-cultural, economic but also political commitment for Turkey. It participates with 800 military staff and civilian personnel in the peace missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo. By way of trilateral meetings, Turkey has over the last few years striven to promote reconciliation among former conflicting parties in the Balkans at large.
After having achieved the highest economic growth in Europe at 8.9% and 7.5% in 2010 and 2011 respectively, the Turkish economy experienced a somewhat slower development in 2012, which picked up again in 2013. For the overall year, the OECD expects growth rates of 3.6% and a further increase for 2014. As the sixteenth largest national economy, Turkey has been a member of the G20, which it will chair in 2015.

Through the customs union, Turkey has close economic ties with Europe. With almost 40% in terms of trade volume and 80% of direct investments, the EU is by far the country’s largest economic partner, although trade relations with the Middle East and North Africa have become increasingly important. With a coordinated opening of new embassies, foreign schools and Turkish Airlines routes, Turkey aims to tap into new markets in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Over the accumulated period 2002 to 2011, Austria ranked fourth among the largest foreign investors in Turkey and from 2009 to 2011 it even ranked first. In 2012, Austria was the second largest and in the first three quarters of 2013 the third largest foreign investor in Turkey.

### 3.1.3. Cyprus

By adopting resolution 2089 (2013) on 24 January and resolution 2114 (2013) on 30 July, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for half a year each, after it had held non-public sessions with the troop contributing states, including Austria. The UNSC resolution on the extension of the mandate for the first half year of 2014 is to be voted on in January 2014. Except for a few minor incidents, the situation in the buffer zone was calm and stable.

With the new government taking office at the beginning of March and following comprehensive preparations, the Cyprus talks – after a lengthy pause – again gathered momentum from September on. President Anastasiades held two unofficial meetings with the leader of the Turkish Republic North Cyprus Eroğlu, the most recent of which took place on 25 November. By the end of the year it was, however, not possible to reach agreement on the wording of an opening statement defining the negotiation basis.

### 3.1.4. Russia

At domestic policy level, the year was relatively calm compared with the large-scale citizens’ protests of 2012. Regional and mayoral elections were held in Russia on 8 September and the only surprise was the outcome in Moscow: according to official figures the incumbent Sergej Sobyanin won by a very narrow margin achieving 51.37%, while his main competitor, the opposition leader Alexej Nawalnij won 27.24% of votes.
Europe

The XXII Olympic Games in Sotchi from 8 to 23 February 2014 gave rise to criticism of the human rights situation in Russia on the part of the media, NGOs and civil society. Criticism focused especially on several controversial legal amendments adopted in 2012 (tightening of the provisions governing NGOs, the internet and the right to assembly, a broader definition of “treason”, the reintroduction of “criminal libel”, a ban on “homosexual propaganda”, etc.).

The two suicide attacks on 29 and 30 December 2013 in the South Russian city of Volgograd are also linked with the Sotchi Olympic Games. Authorities had feared attacks of this kind for a long time and in response substantially strengthened security measures and stepped up the presence of security forces.

In the context of the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Russian constitution in 1993, a comprehensive amnesty was granted to criminal offenders. In total, 25,000 individuals are to benefit from this amnesty with full implementation to take up to six months. Among the individuals who had already been able to benefit from the amnesty were the two Pussy Riot activists imprisoned in 2012, Nadezhda Tolokonnikova und Marija Aljochina, and the Greenpeace activists that were on board the “Artic Sunrise” and had been held in remand since September. The pardon granted to former Yukos Oil chairman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who had been imprisoned since 2003, attracted particular media attention. Critics established a link between these releases and the Olympic Games in Sochi.

At foreign policy level, the year was marked by Russian successes in the policy towards Iran and Syria. After chemical weapons had been used in Syria, Russia, by proposing to have the chemical weapons destroyed abroad, succeeded in convincing the Assad regime to change course and thus prevented a US-led military strike. In the context of the Iranian nuclear talks, Russia also played a constructive role. Relations with the USA remained tense, which was particularly attributable to the fact that Russia granted a year of asylum to former NSA employee Edward Snowden. On the foreign policy stage, Russia stepped up its efforts towards strengthening integration in the post-Soviet area with the goal of establishing a “Eurasian Economic Union” by 2015. The relations between Georgia and Russia, which have been shattered since summer 2008, have shown tendencies towards normalisation. The import of Georgian wine and mineral water to Russia, which had been forbidden since 2006, was again permitted (also see Chapter 3.1.4.1. EU-Russia).

Since the return of Vladimir Putin to the office of President in spring 2012, the Russian economy has experienced little positive development. This also had a negative impact on the education and social system. President Vladimir Putin dedicated a large part of his new year’s address to the topic of economy and announced targeted measures to counter the flight of capital.
Bilateral relations between Austria and Russia were characterised by mutual interests in the fields of culture, business and tourism. “Österreichisch-Russische Kultursaisonen” (Austro-Russian cultural seasons) define the framework for numerous events organised in Vienna and Moscow in 2013 and 2014.

3.1.4.1. EU-Russia

The Strategic Partnership between the EU and Russia has been further developed based on the realisation of “Four Common Spaces” (the Common Economic Space, Common Space on Freedom, Security and Justice, Common Space on Internal Security and the Common Space on Research, Education and Culture). In parallel, negotiations were held on a new EU-Russia Framework Agreement, which is to replace the existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreement from 1997.

In its relations with the EU, Russia is mainly interested in visa liberalisation, energy partnership and European security. Regular summits are held between the EU and Russia. The topics dealt with at the 31st EU-Russia summit in Yekaterinburg held on 3–4 June focused on the implementation of the Partnership for Modernisation set up in 2010 and the discussion of international topics. The goals pursued by the Partnership for Modernisation include identification of new opportunities for mutual investments in the field of innovation.

Important concerns on the part of the EU are the implementation of the commitments undertaken by Russia in the course of its WTO accession and the solution of trade conflicts. The high political priority enjoyed by the relations between the EU and Russia were underlined at the 31st summit. Special importance is attached to the ongoing implementation of the list of “Common Steps” towards visa-free short-term travel, especially document security, border control and migration. Another topic on the summit’s agenda was cooperation in solving international conflicts and a number of global challenges.

3.1.5. Other Eastern European States

3.1.5.1. Ukraine

While President Victor Yanukovych was paying a visit to Austria, he announced a week ahead of the EU Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius that negotiations towards signing the Association Agreement with the EU were to be interrupted.

This decision triggered massive pro-European protests in Ukraine. The violent breaking-up of these protests on Kiev’s central Maidan Square in the night from 29 to 30 November led to mass protests (EuroMaidan) against the
Europe

“Yanukovych system” which were still ongoing by the end of the year with thousands of people participating in protest marches and the blocking of Kiev city hall, the main square and the buildings of the city administration along the Khreshchatyk avenue.

In its relations with Russia, Ukraine was in mid-August faced with tightened controls of its exports upon entering Russia and a ban imposed on a number of Ukrainian products for violations against quality requirements. On 17 December, Russia granted Ukraine (as compensation for the suspension of the signing of the Association Agreement with the EU) a loan of 15 billion US dollars in order to avert the impending currency and budget crisis and a gas price reduction, which is to become effective in January 2014 and is to be renegotiated every three months.

In the case of former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, who was sentenced to imprisonment for having transgressed her powers when signing a contract on Russian gas imports, the European Court of Human Rights unanimously stated in the judgement passed by its Chamber that Ukraine had violated several provisions of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Negotiations on further court proceedings pending against Yulia Tymoshenko were repeatedly postponed because of the defendant’s poor state of health. On 7 April, pardon was granted to two former ministers of the Tymoshenko government Yurij Lutsenko and Heorhiy Filipchuk.

The most important event in terms of bilateral relations was the state visit paid by President Victor Yanukovych to Austria on 20 and 21 November. Bilateral relations are characterised by a very significant presence of Austrian business in the Ukraine. Austria is the fourth largest foreign investor in the country.

Ukraine held the OSCE Chairmanship (Chairperson-in-Office: Foreign Minister Leonid Kozhara) in 2013. Its priorities included resolving protracted conflicts and especially the Transnistrian conflict. In the politico-military dimension, the country focused on arms control, non-proliferation and transnational threats. In the economic and environmental dimension, Ukraine made environmental aspects of energy-related activities a priority. In the human dimension, the country's annual programme focused on the freedom of the media, national minorities, free movement of persons, freedom of religion and beliefs and improving the situation of Roma and Sinti. In addition, Ukraine strove to raise young people’s interest in the OSCE’s work, inter alia by organising an OSCE Youth Summit in Artek in July and August. The Ukrainian Chairmanship launched the Helsinki+40 Process (adopted in 2012 and lasting until 2015), which seeks to further develop the OSCE.

The OSCE Ministerial Council was held in Kiev on 5 and 6 December. The meeting was overshadowed by the strained political situation in the Ukraine and the ongoing protests against the non-signing of the EU Association Agreement.
3.1.5.2. Moldova

On 5 March, the governing three-party coalition “Alliance for European Integration” (AEI) led by Prime Minister Vlad Filat lost a vote of confidence called by the opposition Communist Party in Parliament. After the Constitutional Court had decided on 22 April that the formation of another government led by Vlad Filat was against the constitution because of the allegations of corruption against Filat, former Foreign Minister Iurie Leanca succeeded in again forming a pro-European government.

An Association Agreement that replaces the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1998 as the legal basis for EU-Moldovan relations and also includes a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA) was initialed at the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius (28 and 29 November). As decided by the European Council of 19 and 20 December, the agreement is to be signed before the end of August 2014.

Over the last few years, bilateral relations between Austria and Moldova have further intensified. The new premises of the Austrian Embassy in Chişinău were opened in the presence of State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka in March. Since 2004, Moldova has been one of the priority countries for Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC, Österreichische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit, OEZA). The priorities of the current country strategy for Moldova 2010–2015 are water, vocational education and governance.

The frozen conflict in Transnistria that has been simmering for more than 20 years remains unresolved. A total of five negotiation rounds were held in the “5+2 format” (Moldova and Transnistria as parties, Russia, the Ukraine and the OSCE as facilitators as well as the EU and the USA as observers) but talks have reached a deadlock. One of these rounds took place in the FMEIA on 16 and 17 July. Talks, nevertheless, produced a noteworthy decision, namely that Moldova will establish “Migration Posts” at the “Administrative Boundary Line” with Transnistria. At these posts, holders of foreign passports (some 300,000 inhabitants of Transnistria) have the opportunity to register their entry to Moldova thus avoiding administrative fines.

The OSCE Mission to Moldova strives to facilitate the process of a durable and peaceful solution of the Transnitria conflict. Another focus of its activities is human rights issues, democratisation, freedom of the media, fighting human trafficking and implementation of confidence-building measures. However, in November Transnistria substantially restricted the OSCE Mission’s access to the areas controlled by Tiraspol thus constraining the Mission’s work. At the OSCE Ministerial Council held in Kiev on 5 and 6 December, participants succeeded for the second consecutive time in adopting a declaration on the Transnistria conflict and the “5+2 talks”. Austria continues to stand ready to facilitate logistical support for the Transnistria talks by hosting meetings in Vienna.


3.1.5.3. Belarus

On 29 October, the EU foreign ministers adopted an extension of the travel restrictions and asset freezes imposed in the wake of the 2010 presidential elections against individuals who belong to the regime and/or are close to it until 31 October 2014.

After bilateral relations had for a long time been mainly restricted to trade and business as well as humanitarian cooperation, Austria has since September been represented in Minsk by one diplomat. Bilateral trade has developed positively. After Russia, the Ukraine and Kazakhstan, Belarus is Austria’s fourth most important market in the CIS.

Although the OSCE Office in Minsk was closed following expiry of its mandate at the end of 2010, the OSCE remains alongside the UN one of the few multilateral fora for regular dialogue with Belarus.

3.1.6. Southern Caucasus

3.1.6.1. Armenia

In the parliamentary elections held on 18 February, the incumbent President Serzh Sargsyan was re-elected winning 58.64% of votes. The OSCE acknowledged progress made in the organisation of elections but also pointed to deficiencies and intimidation of voters.

Although negotiations on the Association Agreement between the EU and Armenia were completed successfully, the Agreement was not initialled as planned in November at the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius because President Serzh Sargsyan had surprisingly announced in September that Armenia was striving to join the Eurasian Customs Union led by Russia. Membership of the Eurasian Customs Union is, however, not compatible with the comprehensive and far-reaching Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area Agreement (DCFTA), which is an integral part of the EU Association Agreement. Since the country’s decision in favour of the customs union, Russia’s influence on Armenia has continued to increase, also in the economic area.

In connection with the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and the efforts towards a resolution in the context of the OSCE Minsk Process, a “summit” of the Presidents of State of Armenia and Azerbaijan took place in Vienna on 19 November after the process had been suspended for almost two years. As both distrust and lack of willingness to make practical concessions continues to prevail on both sides, negotiations under the Minsk Process have so far produced little progress. Ongoing violations of the ceasefire and the dispute over the start of a flight connection between Nagorno-Karabakh and Yerevan also impacted the Minsk Process.
Bilateral relations between Austria and Armenia are without friction. Armenia is a priority country for Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC); an ADA coordination office was registered in Yerevan in December. See Chapter 4.2.2.5 for further information on the activities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Armenia.

3.1.6.2. **Azerbaijan**

Winning 84.55% of votes, the incumbent President Ilham Aliyev was re-elected on 9 October and started his third term in office. The OSCE issued a critical statement on the election process, pointing to the restriction of fundamental rights and problems on election day.

Although the meetings between Azerbaijan and Armenia were resumed at presidential level in Vienna on 19 November and the OSCE’s Minsk Group continued its efforts towards a continuation of negotiations, there were no indications of a solution to the problems in the immediate future.

Azerbaijan strives to assume a special position within the EU’s Eastern Partnership while talks on the conclusion of an Association Agreement with the EU are currently on hold. At the Third Summit of the Eastern Partnership in Vilnius Azerbaijan signed a visa facilitation agreement.

The official visit paid by President Ilham Aliyev to Vienna in May marked the most recent highlight in bilateral relations. Azerbaijan is Austria’s most important trading partner in Southern Caucasus.

See Chapter 4.2.2.5 for more information on the activities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Azerbaijan.

3.1.6.3. **Georgia**

With 62.12% of votes, the presidential elections of 27 October were won by the candidate of the governing election alliance “Georgian Dream“, former Education Minister Giorgi Margvelashvili. The OSCE described the elections as “efficiently administered and transparent”.

Head of Government and founder of the election alliance “Georgian Dream”, Bidsina Ivanishvili resigned on 24 November handing over his office to former Interior Minister Irakli Garibashvili.

Diplomatic relations with Russia were broken off under President Saakashvili. The new government strives to pursue a pragmatic approach towards easing the situation, but is faced with increasing pressure on the part of Russia.

The conflict involving the two separatist territorial units Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are recognised as independent states by Russia remains unresolved. The Geneva talks that were established as a negotiation forum have produced hardly any progress so far.
Austria contributes three police officers and five members of the Federal Army to the EU monitoring mission (EUMM) to Georgia, which is currently the international community’s only presence in the country.

Georgia is seeking closest possible rapprochement with the EU in the context of the Eastern Partnership and is striving to join both the EU and NATO. The country’s Association Agreement with the EU was initialled at the Third Eastern Partnership Summit in Vilnius.

Bilateral relations with Georgia are problem-free. The country is one of the priority countries of Austrian Development Cooperation, the ADA cooperation office in Tbilisi was entrusted in 2013 with managing the relevant activities.

See Chapter 4.2.2.5 for more information on the activities of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Georgia.

### 3.2. Africa and the African Union

#### 3.2.1. General Developments

Africa again presented a highly differentiated picture in 2013. Growth rates that are above industrial world levels in many countries and ongoing consolidation of democratic structures in some countries contrasted with ongoing violent conflicts and fragile peace and democratisation processes, especially in North Africa, on the Horn of Africa and in the Great Lakes region.

The number of African countries south of the Sahara that hold multi-party elections is on the rise although at times these are accompanied by shortcomings. Elections were thus held inter alia in Kenya and Zimbabwe, which contrary to previous concerns were conducted in a largely peaceful atmosphere. Elections took place in Madagascar and in Mali that led to constitutionally legitimised governments. The rebellion of the M23 fighters in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo was terminated by an agreement signed at the end of the year. But in spite of the framework agreement concluded by all states in the region under the auspices of the UN, stability in the Great Lakes region is still highly fragile. Although progress was made in pushing back the influence of the Islamist forces in Somalia, the situation in the country is still far from stable. After some rapprochement between Sudan and South Sudan, the discord between South Sudan’s President Salva Kiir and his Vice President Riek Machar translated in a violent conflict along ethnic lines that also led neighbouring Uganda to intervene using military force. A coup in the Central African Republic triggered outrage and violence that resulted in a humanitarian crisis of unimaginable proportions.

#### 3.2.1.1. EU-Africa

The Strategic Partnership between the EU and Africa is the most institutionalised partnership in Africa and focused on promoting political dialogue and
concrete action in areas of joint interest between equal partners. The **EU-Africa Strategy**, adopted in Lisbon in 2007 defines the political framework for relations between the two partners in eight thematic key areas. Although countries in Africa tend to increasingly turn towards new partners in Asia, Latin America and the Arab region, the EU remains Africa’s largest trading partner. Cooperation was further expanded, in particular in the areas of **peace and security, infrastructure and in the development sector**. With EU NAVFOR Somalia – Operation Atalanta, the EU contributes to fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia. In Somalia itself, the EU is still the largest contributor to the ongoing AU Peace Mission AMISOM set up to build safety, security and stability in South and Central Somalia. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the EU supports measures towards re-establishing peace, security and stability in the Great Lakes region and towards democratisation of the country (inter alia with the two ongoing CSDP missions EUSEC and EUPOL) and also supports measures towards fighting terrorism in the Sahel region. The EU does not only provide immediate humanitarian aid in crisis situations but also remains the most important donor of development aid in Africa. In addition, the EU fosters trade between Africa and EU Member States and assists in improving framework conditions for investments in Africa. Preparations were also made for the Fourth EU-Africa Summit to be held in Brussels in April 2014. The main goal defined for this high-level meeting is focused and improved implementation of the EU-Africa Strategy.

### 3.2.2. Developments in the Regions

#### 3.2.2.1. North Africa (Maghreb)

##### 3.2.2.1.1. Egypt

Two years after the fall of the Mubarak regime, the new political leadership – the Muslim Brotherhood and the first democratically elected President Mohammed Morsi – were faced with rapidly growing opposition. Economic mismanagement and determined steps towards Islamisation of society induced highly diverse opposition groups to form an alliance ranging from activists who felt cheated of the fruits of the 2011 revolution, to liberal opposition activists, representatives of the Coptic minority and former Mubarak-followers.

The “Tamarod” movement issued a call for the resignation of President Morsi. By the end of June, the movement had within two months – according to its own statement – collected more than 22 million signatures, which exceeded the number of votes cast for Morsi at the presidential elections by 9 million. Riots in the streets and the breaking-off of political dialogue between the parties served to further impact legal uncertainty, were a burden on the economic climate and resulted in a sharp decline in tourism.
On 1 July, following mass protests against the President, the army served the latter an ultimatum to resolve the conflict with the opposition. When the ultimatum had expired after 48 hours without Morsi complying with it, the army removed him and his government from office. During this process, the army received high-profile support both from the liberal and the religious camps. The opposition celebrated a new revolution while partisans of the Morsi government spoke of a military coup.

The EU and the international community appealed to the army leadership to restore constitutional order without delay. EU HR Catherine Ashton repeatedly visited Egypt, meeting inter alia former President Morsi who had in the meantime been imprisoned and charged with numerous crimes.

In a road map, the new government sketched out a process that was to lead via a new constitution, parliamentary elections and presidential elections to the restoration of constitutional order within one year. At the end of the year, a new draft constitution was presented which provides for improved protection of fundamental rights while at the same time strengthening the special position enjoyed by the army.

### 3.2.2.1.2. Algeria

The first large-scale terror attack against a natural gas production facility in Tiguentourine near In Amenas in January clearly highlighted the precarious security situation in the south of Algeria. The unstable situation in Libya, the military operation Serval in the North of Mali and fighting at the Algerian-Tunisian border faced the Algerian military with great challenges throughout the entire year. At domestic policy level, social and political tensions became apparent, primarily in the South of the country and led to demonstrations and unrest in all cities. In April, a stroke suffered by President Bouteflika practically brought political life to a halt. The announced constitutional reform was not implemented.

### 3.2.2.1.3. Libya

The persistently fragile security situation and the correspondingly unstable political situation have slowed the pace of the political transition process towards democratic restructuring.

Since May, the EU has been active in the country, by inter alia deploying a civil CSDP mission in the field of border management and protection (Border Management and Assistance Mission, EUBAM Libya).

### 3.2.2.1.4. Morocco

After several months of negotiations following Parti Istiqlal’s withdrawal from government, Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane formed his second cabinet. Sworn in on 10 October, this cabinet is now composed of the pro-
challenges and developments on all five continents

liberal “Rassemblement National des Indépendants” (RNI), the “Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme” and the “Mouvement Populaire”, while the latter two already formed part of the previous coalition government. Little progress was made in the concrete shaping of the legislative framework defined by the new constitution of 2011. The discussion on a broad-based reform of the judiciary was pushed ahead. In the field of asylum and migration policy, King Mohammed VI initiated a re-orientation which was welcomed by all sides. The relationship with Algeria was marked by mutual reproaches in the field of human rights and a marred discussion atmosphere. The signing of a Mobility Partnership, the opening of negotiations on a comprehensive and deepened Free Trade Agreement as well as the successful conclusion of the Fisheries Protocol contributed to further strengthening the ties between the EU and Morocco.

3.2.2.1.5. Tunisia

The assassination of opposition leaders in February and in July further aggravated the political crisis. In large-scale demonstrations involving the political opposition, civil society and the “Tamarod protest movement”, inspired by the Egyptian example, participants called for the immediate resignation of the government led by PM Larayedh. The trade union federation took the initiative and together with the confederation of entrepreneurs, the Tunisian Human Rights League and the bar association formed a “quartet” that presented a proposal for resolving the crisis. This proposal inter alia comprised the adoption of a new constitution and the resignation of the government. This opened up realistic prospects for a democratic renewal of the country. Tunisia’s economic development, however, remained hampered by inflation, high taxes and unemployment.

3.2.2.2. Horn of Africa and East Africa

3.2.2.2.1. Ethiopia

In the local elections on 14 April, the governing EPRDF coalition and its associated parties won around 99% of the votes cast. In these elections, Ethiopians were able to cast their votes for the councillors of the Woredas (districts) and Kebeles (village units) as well as for the municipal and village councillors including those in the capital Addis Ababa. The opposition parties and their supporters stayed away from the elections in large numbers.

In a wave of arrests in May, more than 50 leading public figures were detained on the suspicion of corruption and fraud.

On 7 October, the independent incumbent Girma Wolde-Giorgis was replaced after two terms in office by Mulatu Teshome Wirtu, most recently Ambassador of Ethiopia to Turkey, as President of Ethiopia.
At the beginning of the year, Ethiopia took over the chair of the African Union (AU) from Benin. On 25 May, Addis Ababa hosted the official summit celebrating the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), of which the AU emerged in 2002. The anniversary summit was attended by a number of high-level international participants.

The Ethiopian government has undertaken efforts towards giving an outward appearance of unity and continuity. The country’s foreign policy thus remained characterised by its “regional power function” in the highly sensitive Horn of Africa. The country’s shift of foreign policy interests away from traditional Western donors towards BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India and China) was also continued.

3.2.2.2.2. Eritrea

A coup d’état on 21 January failed and in October intensified recruitment efforts for the national labour service led to clashes between civilians and security forces. The flow of ten thousands of refugees seeking to flee Eritrea continued in 2013. The majority of the migrants who tragically died when a boat capsized off Lampedusa on 3 October were, for instance, Eritreans.

Sheila Keetharuth, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, presented her report to the HRC on 28 May. On 14 June, the HRC extended her mandate while the regime continued to refuse to cooperate with her. In spite of positive signs in the lead-up, the annual report presented on 13 July by the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea was negative. Resolution 2111 (2013) adopted by the UNSC based on this report, described Eritrea’s influence in Somalia and the conflict with Djibouti as a threat to international peace and extended the arms embargo against Eritrea as well as the mandate of the Monitoring Group.

On 28 January, Eritrea and the UN Country Team signed the Strategic Partnership Cooperation Framework 2013–2016. In March, the UNDP adopted the UNDP Eritrea Country Programme 2013–2016. In May, Eritrea also signed three programme documents relating to the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) that had been frozen since November 2011 and is now being continued.

3.2.2.2.3. Kenya

The dominating political event in Kenya was the general elections held on 4 March. At these first elections held under the new constitution of 2010, the country’s president and parliament and – at local level – governors, senators, women representatives and county representatives were elected.

Election day was largely free of violence and friction-free. But technical problems in connection with the counting of votes meant that the country’s independent election authority was able to announce the official result only
one week after elections were held. In the end, Uhuru Kenyatta, the son of the founder of the state, obtained 6.173,433 votes or 50.07 %, while former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, winning 5.340,546 votes only reached 43.28 %.

During the election campaign, but especially after the ballot, the indictment by the International Criminal Court in The Hague against President Uhuru Kenyatta, Vice President William Ruto and the radio reporter Joshua Sang were a major focus of media interest both within Kenya and internationally. Proceedings against William Ruto and Joshua Sang started in October. After the start of President Kenyatta’s court hearing had already been postponed several times, Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda announced in December that she needed more time in order to prepare the charge and present witnesses who were willing to make a statement. At the same time, officials in Kenya have gone to great efforts to gather support for a termination or postponement of the proceedings or a referral of the cases back to the Kenyan judiciary. These efforts were, however, to no avail.

3.2.2.2.4. Somalia

After the final end of the transitional period, the resignation of the transitional government and the elections establishing new governmental institutions in 2012, the balance of power was – especially in South and Central Somalia – shifted further towards the new federal government in Mogadishu. This was also possible thanks to the successes of the by now approx. 17,000 troops deployed by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in fighting Al-Shabaab. But as it still controls most of the open land in South and Central Somalia, Al-Shabaab continued to play a destabilising role and increasingly resorted to asymmetrical warfare by launching suicide and bomb attacks.

The recognition of the new government of Somalia by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) opened up the opportunity to benefit from its support after relations had been interrupted for 22 years. Despite certain economic progress, developments towards normalisation of the country’s economic situation were impaired by persistent security risks and the lack of a permanent and credible political settlement.

A significant event was the donors’ conference organised by the EU in Brussels at the beginning of the year at which Austria pledged to provide 200,000 euros for the reconstruction of Somalia.

In Somaliland, President Ahmed Mohamed Silanyo undertook a major government reshuffle. At the same time the two largest opposition parties agreed on joining forces against the government.

The main goal pursued by the government of Somaliland is the currently unpromising endeavour to be recognised as a sovereign state. Economically, the region benefited mainly from transfers of the diaspora and major investments by international oil and gas exploration companies.
The ongoing instability on the Horn of Africa was a recurring feature on the UNSC’s agenda and intensively dealt with throughout the year. The UNSC adopted resolution 2093 (2013) extending the authorisation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and partially lifting the arms embargo, resolution 2102 (2013) establishing the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), resolution 2111 (2013) adapting the 751/1907 sanction regime and extending the mandate of the monitoring group, resolution 2124 (2013) increasing AMISOM’s troop strength and resolution 2125 (2013) extending the authorising of measures aimed at fighting piracy off the Somali coast.

The EU is present on the Horn of Africa inter alia in the context of two military CSDP operations and one civilian CSDP mission. The goals pursued by this presence are: training of the Somali armed forces (EUTM Somalia), securing of maritime trading routes on the Horn of Africa and/or the Gulf of Aden (EU NAVFOR Atalanta), and supporting the development of maritime expertise of regional navies in Djibouti, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania (EUCAP Nestor).

3.2.2.2.5. Sudan and South Sudan

In September, the government’s austerity plans led to severe unrest in several Sudanese cities, which, according to estimates, claimed up to 200 lives. In the wake of these events, a group of reformists led by the former advisor to the President Ghazi Salah Eddin broke away from the governing party in November while the opposition party National Consensus Forces announced coordination with the armed opposition movements. A comprehensive cabinet reshuffle on 8 December led inter alia to the replacement of the Vice Presidents Nafie and Taha.

As fighting continued, the situation of refugees both in Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile remained dramatic. In response to rebel attacks in North Kordofan, military pressure was stepped up by the army. On 6 April, a splinter group of the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM-Bashar) signed the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur in Doha. However, its leader Mohamed Bashar died on 12 May. On 7 and 8 April, a donors’ conference for Darfur was held in Doha. In East Sudan, the planned reintegration of former “Eastern Front” fighters was completed.

The UNSC extended the mandate of the AU-UN hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 31 August 2014. The mandate of the UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) was extended until 31 May 2014. The mandate of the EU Special Representative for Sudan and South Sudan Rosalind Marsden was extended until 31 October, her mandate for the time from November, however, was combined with that of the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa, Alexander Rondos.

Due to the standstill in the implementation of the Cooperation Agreement between Sudan and South Sudan, the former opposed a resumption of oil
deliveries. After an implementation plan for the agreement was signed by both states on 12 March, oil deliveries were, however, resumed from May onwards. At a meeting held in Juba on 22 October, the President of South Sudan Salva Kiir Mayardit and the President of Sudan President Omar Hassan Ahmed al Bashir, confirmed their commitment to the 2012 agreement and undertook to create a demilitarised zone, end the support given to rebels and open border crossings. The Abyei issue still remains unresolved; an informal status referendum held on 27 and 29 October was recognised neither by Sudan nor by South Sudan.

Sudan still refuses to cooperate with the ICC while the rebels repeatedly offered to cooperate. On the rebels’ side, however, Saleh Jerbo, General Chief of Staff of the Sudan Liberation Army – Unity died on 22 April.

On 23 July, South Sudanese President Salva Kiir Mayardit dismissed his entire government cabinet, including Vice President Riek Machar, after the latter’s executive powers had already been curtailed on 15 April and the national reconciliation initiative overseen by Machar had been suspended. In the course of the subsequent government reshuffle Barnaba Marial Benjamin was appointed new Foreign Minister.

In December, the political differences between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar evolved into a conflict that spread throughout the entire country, running along ethnic lines (Nuer-Dinka). Fighting between government troops and the rebels who support Machar focused mainly on the city of Bor in the state of Jonglei and on the city of Bentiu in the state of Unity. The serious unrest in South Sudan led to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people and according to UN figures also claimed more than a thousand lives. In the light of this outbreak of violence, the UNSC on 24 December unanimously resolved to increase the strength of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) from 8,000 to almost 14,000 personnel. Giving in to international pressure, both parties to the conflict declared that they were ready for peace talks, which are to start on 4 January 2014 mediated by the East African regional organisation Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) in Addis Ababa.

EU support for Sudan has focused on the provision of humanitarian aid and basic services in the country.

Furthermore, the civilian CSDP training, assistance and advice mission EUAVSEC Juba (European Union Aviation Security Mission) was active in the field of aviation and airport security at the international airport in Juba.

3.2.2.3. Southern Africa

3.2.2.3.1. Angola

The government started to implement the National Development Plan 2013–2017 that focuses on poverty reduction, infrastructure development and
providing better access to education and training for young people. Angola played a more pro-active role in seeking solutions to conflict in Africa and especially in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo.

3.2.2.3.2. Madagascar

After having been postponed several times, the first round of presidential elections was held on 25 October followed by a second ballot on 20 December and the parliamentary elections. Although the precise election result had not yet been announced by the end of the year, it was clear that a run-off ballot was to be held between the presidential candidates Robinson Jean-Louis and Hery Rajaonarimampianina.

3.2.2.3.3. Malawi

People’s initial enthusiasm for President Joyce Banda, who has been in office since April 2012, abated. This is attributable firstly to poor communication on the part of the government and secondly to people’s perception that the tough austerity course and economic adaptation measures the country had been subject to as a result of her predecessor’s disastrous economic policy, are not appropriately supported by the political class.

In October, Malawi was furthermore shaken by a fraud and corruption scandal, which also involved numerous members of government and represented another severe blow to people’s trust in the governmental system. Consequently, a lifting of the pay-out stop for budget assistance by the largest donor countries was made dependent on concrete and sincere reforms in fiscal administration.

3.2.2.3.4. Mozambique

The opposition party RENAMO (National Resistance Mozambique) delivered on the threats it had been voicing since 2012 and started a (small-scale) armed conflict against the FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) government. RENAMO MPs, however, continued work in parliament demanding a change in the electoral law as well as the full integration of its former guerrilla fighters into the state’s security forces. In turn, the government demanded the total disarmament of RENAMO. The municipal elections held on 20 November were boycotted by RENAMO. FRELIMO lost a large number of votes to the third large political party in the country, MDM (Mozambique Democratic Movement).

Despite political developments and flood disasters in large parts of the country at the beginning of the year, Mozambique was able to further increase its strong economic growth which also translated in incremental trade with Austria.
3.2.2.3.5. Zimbabwe

After the parties forming the Government of National Unity had agreed on the draft of a new constitution, the latter was submitted to a popular referendum at which the new constitution was adopted by a large majority on 16 and 17 March. General elections were held on 31 July. The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) led by President Robert Mugabe was declared official winner and subsequently formed a one-party government. The largest opposition parties declared that the elections had been rigged but accepted the seats in parliament they had won.

3.2.2.3.6. South Africa

Developments in South Africa were marked by large-scale strikes, mainly in the mining and industry sectors, which contributed to the comparably low economic growth rates. The judicial commission of inquiry set up to investigate the shooting of 34 mineworkers in August 2012 continued its work. In the lead-up to the 2014 parliamentary elections, several new political parties were formed. In July, the government was reshuffled by President Zuma. In December, the first President of democratic South Africa (1994–1998), Nelson Mandela, died and his funeral was attended by a large number of international dignitaries.

South Africa’s foreign policy focus remained on Africa, with the country’s politicians assuming active roles in mediation efforts mainly in Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Sudan/South Sudan. Following clashes with the Seleka rebels, South Africa withdrew its military contingent from the Central African Republic in March. The country’s military commitment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was, however, stepped up. In November, South Africa hosted the first joint SADC summit and the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR).

3.2.2.4. The Great Lakes Region

3.2.2.4.1. Burundi

While Burundi is still dependent on international donors, the process of coming to terms with the decade-long, ethnically motivated civil wars has so far made little progress.

The governing party still has comprehensive control over the country. Due to the absence of Burundi’s opposition (which is largely abroad), the government enjoys large-scale popular support – especially in the rural regions – and has not been cooperative in dealing with war crimes, political opponents, the media and NGOs.

A seminar, organised under the auspices of the UN, in preparation of the forthcoming general elections in 2015, is considered the most important
political signal the country has sent out over the last few years. This seminar, held by Burundi, was the first official contact between government and opposition representatives since the signing of the Arusha Agreement.

The political climate in the country which has been generally tense anyway was further exacerbated by demographic pressure, scarcity of land and an ailing economy.

In January and in July, the head of the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), Special Representative Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, informed the UNSC on developments in the country. In February, the Office’s mandate was extended by resolution 2090 (2013).

3.2.2.4.2. Democratic Republic of the Congo

President Joseph Kabila and his coalition continue to dominate political developments in the country with the opposition remaining marginalized due to the ongoing restriction of political freedoms on the one hand and internal conflict on the other. Leading opposition politicians stayed away from a national dialogue process, initiated by the government in September 2013. In October, at the end of this process, President Kabila announced the swift appointment of a unity government.

In the context of the UN’s intensive efforts to promote peace, security and cooperation in the Great Lakes Region, the UNSC extended the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) under resolution 2098 (2013) also establishing an intervention brigade to neutralise armed groups. In press and Presidential statements, the UNSC welcomed inter alia the transfer of rebel leader Bosco Ntaganda to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in March and the joint visit paid by the UNSG together with the President of the World Bank Group to the Great Lakes Region in May.

The uprising of the “M23” rebel group that had started in April 2012 was pushed back in November 2013 by government troops and the MONUSCO intervention brigade. Subsequently, the “M23” laid down their arms and signed an agreement with the government. However, dozens of other armed rebel groups in the eastern part of the country, weak government structures and slow progress in implementing the urgently necessary reforms continue to pose a threat to stability in large parts of the country, mainly in the East-Congolese Kivu provinces.

With two civilian CSDP missions, the EU also strives to contribute towards stabilising the country. One mission, EUPOL RD Congo, focuses on training police forces and judiciary officers, while the other mission, EUSEC RD Congo, supports reform in the security sector. Austria also participates in the latter mission by contributing one member of the Austrian federal army.
3.2.2.4.3. Rwanda

The parliamentary elections in September, which were – as expected – clearly won by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), once again underlined the dominant role played by President Paul Kagame’s party. With a very high turnout of 98%, the RPF that has been in power since 1994 reached 76.22% according to the electoral commission. Two of the official opposition parties ended up far behind, the Social Democratic Party which is in fact loyal to the government won 13.03% while the Liberal Party (PL) won 9.29% of votes.

As has been the case in previous years, Human Rights NGOs repeatedly noted shortfalls in civilian and political rights in Rwanda. What was, however, acknowledged was that after years of discussions the 2008 genocide ideology act, which has frequently been used against the opposition, was defused. Likewise, the situation was eased in connection with the new media acts, which had in the past massively curtailed the activities of journalists in exercising their profession.

3.2.2.4.4. Uganda

President Museveni and his governing National Resistance Movement (NRM) succeeded in further strengthening their power in the country but are increasingly criticised for developing somewhat autocratic features. Corruption is still a major problem – also for the international donor community. The President was faced with criticism following a government reshuffle in summer in which he made an army general Minister of the Interior. The country’s anti-homosexuality legislation is a highly controversial issue, both from a domestic policy and a human rights point of view.

Ongoing fighting in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between government troops and the “M23” rebels has throughout the last few years produced a continuous flow of refugees heading towards the southwest of Uganda. The situation in South Sudan and the fighting that has flared up between the Dinka and Murle ethnic groups in the state of Jonglei have led to a further increase in numbers of refugees.

The main focus of Uganda’s foreign policy is on its neighbouring countries and involvement in regional organisations, especially the East African Community (EAC) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), as well as in the context of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). Underlining the important role it plays in the region, Uganda contributed a troop contingent of some 7,000 personnel to the AU mission in Somalia and following the outbreak of the conflict in South Sudan on 15 December, Uganda also sent soldiers to South Sudan to protect critical infrastructure.
3.2.2.5. West Africa

3.2.2.5.1. Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, President Blaise Compaoré succeeded in living up to his reputation as mediator in the region and especially in the Mali conflict by enabling the signing of the Ouagadougou Agreement on 18 June. At domestic policy level, the key event was the refusal by the opposition to the introduction of a senate as the second chamber in Parliament. The establishment of this second chamber was perceived as further strengthening the President’s power. Protests, also directed against social injustice in the country, took place in a largely peaceful atmosphere.

3.2.2.5.2. Cabo Verde

The Special Partnership agreed between the EU and Cabo Verde in 2007 was further implemented and political dialogue continued, also in the context of visits paid by President Jorge Carlos Fonseca and Prime Minister José Maria Pereira Neves to Brussels. After having signed a visa facilitation agreement, the country also concluded a readmission agreement with the EU on 18 April. Cabo Verde continued its efforts towards improving competitiveness and reducing poverty.

3.2.2.5.3. Côte d’Ivoire

Notwithstanding economic successes achieved by the government of President Alassane Ouattara, progress in bringing about security in the country and reconciliation with the followers of former President Laurent Gbagbo, who is currently under arrest at the ICC in The Hague, was rather modest. Local elections were held in April, marking the formal conclusion of the transition phase. Elections were, however, again boycotted by the FPI party that is loyal to Gbagbo. The government nevertheless sent out certain signals to Gbagbo followers with the release of several prisoners (including Gbagbo’s son).

By adopting UN resolution 2101 (2013), the UN in fact extended the 1572 sanctions regime and with resolution 2112 (2013) it extended the UN operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) and also provided for a reduction in the number of troops.

3.2.2.5.4. Ghana

After the narrow result of the presidential elections held in mid-December 2012 had been confirmed by court in the middle of the year, the government led by President John Dramani Mahama strove to reduce the high debt burden without threatening Ghana’s attractiveness as a business location in West Africa, which the country had achieved thanks to its democratic maturity and very high rate of economic growth. Austrian business is also increas-
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

ingly interested in the country as reflected in a visit paid to the country by President of the Austrian Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl in September.

3.2.2.5.5. Guinea-Bissau

The transition government set up after a coup in April 2012, was – except for the ECOWAS Member States – still not recognized by the international community. At the beginning of the year, José Ramos-Horta, former President of Timor-Leste, was appointed Special Envoy and head of the United Nations Integrated Peace-Building Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS). In the course of the year, the Special Envoy reported several times to the UNSC on the efforts towards re-establishing constitutional order in the country. The Office’s mandate was extended and adapted by resolution 2092 (2013) and by resolution 2103 (2013).

At the end of May, the country’s two largest parties, PAIGC and PRS agreed to form an inclusive transition government. The presidential and parliamentary elections, originally scheduled for 24 November, were eventually postponed until 16 March 2014. After the country’s authorities had forced the reception of Syrian refugees on a flight of the Portuguese airline TAP, Foreign Minister Delfim da Silva offered his resignation in December, which was, however, not accepted.

3.2.2.5.6. Liberia

By adopting resolution 2116 (2013), the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), while at the same time reducing troop deployment. By adopting resolution 2128 (2013), the UNSC adapted and extended the 1521 sanctions regime.

3.2.2.5.7. Mali

In January, Islamist terror groups that had already brought the northern provinces of Mali under their control in 2012 pushed further towards the south of the country. At Mali’s request, France on 11 January 2013 intervened in the fighting in the context of Opération Serval, using specialist forces and airplanes and putting a halt to the Islamist force’s advance. In the course of the following weeks, the occupied territories were again brought under government control. At the height of the operation, France’s presence reached 4,000 personnel with the number of troops reduced to 2,500 by the end of the year. On 17 January, the first soldiers of the ECOWAS force AFISMA arrived in Mali. In April, the UNSC adopted resolution 2100 (2013), transforming AFISMA into the Multidimensional Integrated UN Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The mission’s troop strength amounts to up to 11,200 military personnel and 1,440 police officers and responsibility was handed over from AFISMA to MINUSMA in the middle of the year. Furthermore, the UNSC adopted several Presidential Statements on Sahel, in which it inter
alalia welcomed the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel region and the joint visit the UNSG and the President of the World Bank Group had paid to the region, but also addressed the threat posed by drug trafficking. Although the MINUSMA’s target strength amounts to 12,600 personnel, it only reached 5,870 at the end of the year. In addition to the ECOWAS intervention, a military CSDP operation was carried out on 18 February 2013 to provide training and support for the Malian army (EU Training Mission, EUTM) to which Austria contributes nine doctors and/or paramedics.

On 18 June, the interim government and representatives of the Tuareg separatist movement MNLA, that had already disassociated themselves from the Islamists, signed the Ouagadougou Agreement, which is to prepare the ground for elections and subsequently a comprehensive peace agreement. Thanks to massive support by the EU election observation mission which also included Austrians, presidential elections were held on 28 July and 11 August. The elections were won by former Prime Minister Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta, who presented his new government on 8 September and announced reconciliation between the north and the Malian institutions, the fight against corruption and impunity as well as the reconstruction of the state as his priorities. Following the second round of presidential elections on 15 December, at which the President’s alliance scored a two thirds majority, the country’s democratic transition was formally completed.

At the end of November, the leader of the putschists, Amadou Sanogo, was arrested on charges of murder and abduction of persons in the course of the putsch. At the end of December, the Malian government instructed the Supreme Court to start investigations on the suspicion of treason against former President Amadou Toumani Touré. In spite of these developments, the security situation in the North remained precarious; Malian and international troops secured the larger urban centres in the North, but have however not succeeded in bringing the entire region under their control, which is why the administration was not able to return to the North. At the end of the year, talks with the rebels had reached a deadlock.

In the context of the international donors’ conference that was held in Brussels on 15 May, the international community pledged funding of 3.25 billion euros, the share the EU and its Member States pledged to contribute to this sum amounts to 1.3 billion euros. Austria’s contribution for 2013 totalled 1.95 million euros. Apart from providing support to Mali, Austria also supports the provision of care and assistance to Malian refugees in the neighbouring reception countries and especially in Burkina Faso, which is one of the priority countries of Austrian Development Cooperation (OEZA).

3.2.2.5.8. Nigeria

The escalation of the conflict with the Islamist sect Boko Haram and other Salafist terrorist organisations in the north of Nigeria led to the proclama-
tion of a state of emergency in three northern provinces, which was further extended in autumn this year by another six months. Before the start of its membership of the UNSC, Nigeria’s reputation was impacted by the approach pursued by its security forces which gave rise to human rights concerns, especially in the North of the country where conditions are civil war-like, and also by the lifting of the moratorium of the death penalty, in force since 2006, in June. The emerging privatisation of the energy sector inspires hope that it may be possible to remedy the energy shortage, which massively impairs the investment climate in Nigeria, in the medium term.

The visit paid by Foreign Minister Olugbenga Ashiru to Vienna in April led to the signing of an investment protection agreement. The opening of the Nigerian Business and Investment Forum in Vienna by Interior Minister Abba Moro in June and the visit paid by the President of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber Christoph Leitl to Nigeria in September reflect the momentum gained in the areas of bilateral trade.

3.2.2.5.9. Senegal

President Macky Sall carried out a government reshuffle in September, thus emphasizing his efforts towards reform and improvement of the economic situation. The previous Minister of Justice, Aminata Touré took over the office of Prime Minister. The number of government members was also increased from 25 to 32 and members of the President’s party APR increasingly acceded to government positions. In April, the investigation and prosecution of cases of unjust enrichment by politicians during the era of former President Abdoulaye Wade culminated in his son, former Infrastructure Minister Karim Wade, being remanded in custody. International attention was also attracted by the establishment of “Extraordinary African Chambers” in the courts of Senegal in Dakar set up to conduct the trial against the former dictator of Tchad, Hissène Habré, who had spent the last few decades in Dakar and was taken into custody pending trial.

The most important goal defined by President Sall is a peaceful resolution of the conflict on the independence of the Casamance region that has been raging for 30 years. Based on mediation efforts by local religious leaders and the Sant’Egidio community, it was indeed possible to continue the dialogue with individual rebel groups.

3.2.2.5.10. Sierra Leone

On 22 February, President Ernest Bai Koroma presented his new cabinet. On 26 March, the UNSC adopted resolution 2097 (2013), thus extending the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIP-SIL) by another year until the end of March 2014.
3.2.2.5.11. Central African Republic
The seizure of power by the rebel movement Seleka in March led to the collapse of law and order in the country and the onset of the most severe violations of human rights. While large parts of the population were fleeing their homes, a famine catastrophe was only averted thanks to massive international assistance. It was necessary to step up the number of international troops in the country in order to prevent a further escalation of the situation. In December, the European Council confirmed the Union’s willingness to examine the use of relevant instruments to contribute towards stabilising the country, including under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), in both its military and civilian dimensions.

3.2.2.5.12. Piracy off the Gulf of Guinea
Enhanced regional cooperation between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in fighting piracy off the Gulf of Guinea has produced initial success. As the reasons for piracy are inter alia attributable to the precarious security situation in the Niger Delta (oil theft, kidnappings), Nigeria and the government’s political will play a key role in resolving the problem of piracy in the long-term.

3.2.2.5.13. Sahel Region
As part of a comprehensive EU Strategy for the Sahel Region, which, besides Niger also includes Mali and Mauretania, the EU launched the strategic advice and training mission EUCAP Sahel in 2012 to support the authorities of Niger in their struggle for more security and against terrorism and organised crime. The mission also maintains liaison offices in Mauretania and Mali.

3.2.2.6. Western Sahara
On 25 April, the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was extended under UNSC resolution 2099 by another twelve months. Efforts undertaken mainly by the USA towards extending MINURSO’s mandate by a component that involves monitoring of the human rights situation remained futile due to Morocco’s resistance. During his semi-annual report to the UNSC on the situation in Western Sahara, the UNSG’s Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, announced in October that meetings with the parties were to be held in the context of the shuttle diplomacy he had started.
3.2.3. Regional Integration Issues

The original target defined by the African Union (AU) for the year 2013 was shifting the current priorities in the fields of peace and security towards stepping up its activities in other policy areas. The crises on the continent (Mali, Central African Republic, Somalia and South Sudan), however, again required the organisation’s full attention. At the beginning of the year, Ethiopia took over the chair of the AU. At an extra-ordinary summit held in Addis Ababa on 25 May under the heading of “Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance”, the double anniversary celebrating the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) 50 years ago and ten years of AU. At this summit, the AU adopted its currently third and results-oriented strategy plan for the years 2014 to 2017. The AU Commission also launched its initiative Agenda 2063, under which a long-term strategic plan for the development of Africa over the next 50 years is to be prepared.

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) inter alia strove to find solutions to the crises in Somalia and South Sudan. The organisation, which is currently chaired by Ethiopia, contributed significantly to the signing of an agreement between the Somali central government and Juba-land in Addis Ababa on 28 August, which was preceded by eight months of negotiations. The agreement covers issues related to the decentralization of the country and to the control of significant infrastructure such as the port of Kismayo. Immediately after the outbreak of fighting in South Sudan, IGAD also intervened as a mediating body on 15 December. Until the end of 2015, Austrian Development Cooperation will continue to support the Rapid Response Fund of IGAD’s regional Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN), established to detect and quickly respond to cross-border conflicts over grazing land and water in the IGAD member states Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan and Eritrea (whose membership is currently suspended).

Activities within the East African Community (EAC) were mainly characterised by intensified efforts towards realising its ambitious goals (monetary union, common visa, etc.). It was mainly Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda – who formed the “Coalition of the Willing” – that demonstrated special reform zeal, while Tanzania took a rather sceptical view of some of the projects. In spite of the signing of a protocol on monetary union and agreement on large infrastructure projects, for instance in the field of railway construction, only little tangible progress was made. The deadlock in the negotiations between the EAC and the EU on the extension of the European Partnership Agreement (EPA), which urgently have to be completed prior to the expiry of the current EPA 2014 – proved to be among the largest stumbling blocks in this context.

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) mediated successfully in the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) and held an
extra-ordinary summit on 3 April at which it condemned the violent seizure of power in the CAR and discussed how to proceed.

The efforts launched by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the context of the crises in Mali and in Guinea-Bissau yielded some success. Little progress was, however, made regarding the urgently needed internal reform process towards improving ECOWAS’ institutional implementation capacity. Negotiations between the EU and ECOWAS on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) based on the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 were, however, not completed by the end of the reporting period.

At the SADC summit held in Lilongwe (Malawi) in August, Malawi took over the chair of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) from Mozambique. Malawi will continue to maintain the focus on economy and infrastructure. Namibia took over from Tanzania as chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation.

The SADC’s mediation efforts towards implementation of the Global Political Agreement, reached in 2009 between the government and the opposition in Zimbabwe, were declared completed at the SADC summit in August following the elections in Zimbabwe. The efforts towards reinstating the constitutional order in Madagascar following the coup of 2009 were continued and further intensified in the lead-up to the parliamentary elections.

3.3. America

3.3.1. USA

3.3.1.1. General Developments

The year was characterised by the beginning of President Barack Obama’s second term in office. He appointed new staff to important positions in his administration, including in the State Department, the Department of the Treasury, the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defence. In Congress, the House of Representatives continued to be dominated by a Republican majority while the Democrats kept their majority in the Senate.

The domestic policy debate focused on budget development, the implementation of the healthcare reform (“Obamacare”) and the revelations by Edward Snowden. In March, automatic budget cuts took effect which related in particular to the administration’s discretionary expenses. As Congress was not able to reach an agreement on the budget by the beginning of the financial year 2014 and the Republicans in the House of Representatives linked the budget issues with Obama’s healthcare reform they had rejected, a large number of federal authorities remained closed for 16 days as of 1 October (“government shutdown”). After a last minute compromise was reached that ended the shutdown, Congress in December agreed on a budget for 2014 and
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

2015, which to some extent provided for suspension of the cuts, combined with savings and increases in fees and charges.

The implementation of President Barack Obama’s healthcare reform was characterised by a series of mishaps. In his efforts to limit the damage, President Obama was subjected to severe criticism by the Republicans who continued to bitterly oppose healthcare reform.

The revelations of former intelligence staff member Edward Snowden in June on the US intelligence services’ espionage practices triggered an intensive discussion on national security interests and counter-terrorism versus protection of privacy. In December, President Obama set up an experts’ group that submitted a report on proposed reforms.

Political conflict between Democrats and Republicans as well as increased polarisation of US society prevented agreement on stricter arms legislation, immigration reform and climate protection. At the same time, the US population is increasingly disenchanted with politics.

On the foreign policy stage, the Obama administration continued to focus on diplomacy, dialogue, and international cooperation. The priorities on the US foreign policy agenda were the Near and Middle East as well as the Asian-Pacific region. The complete withdrawal of all US combat troops from Afghanistan, planned for the end of 2014, was continued. Following this pull-out, only a small US troop force that assumes training and special tasks will remain in the country. The main objectives of the US commitment remained the elimination of al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, the training of Afghan security forces and supporting the (re)building of the country and its institutions.

After chemical weapons had been used in the civil war in Syria, a limited military strike against the Assad regime was considered. But as agreement was reached on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal, the US refrained from taking this step. Following the tightening of the sanctions regime in November, a preliminary agreement on freezing the Iranian nuclear programme was reached with Teheran. The USA remained highly committed to the Middle East Peace Process between Israel and the Palestinians after Secretary of State John Kerry succeeded in July in convincing both parties to start direct talks.

In the Asian-Pacific region, the USA found itself faced with North Korean threats, increasing tensions in the South China Sea and the expansion of the Air Defence Identification Zone by China and South Korea. In response to North Korea’s threatening gestures, the USA in March announced its intention to step up its missile defence along the US West Coast. There was an active exchange of visits between the USA and the countries in the region. In this context, the visits paid by Chinese President Xi Jinping to the USA in June, and by US Vice President Joe Biden to Japan, South Korea and China in December marked some clear highlights. President Obama’s planned visit
to South East Asia in October was, however, prevented by the “government shutdown”. Negotiations on the establishment of a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which currently covers twelve countries, were continued.

Death sentences were executed in the USA. In the reporting period 39 individuals were executed, 16 in Texas and 7 in Florida, while 80 individuals were sentenced to death. This is a slight increase over 2012. In May, the State of Maryland abolished capital punishment thus increasing the number of states without the death penalty to 18.

In June, the Supreme Court ruled that the Defense of Marriage Act was unconstitutional because it violated the rights of homosexual individuals. At the end of the year, same-sex marriages were permitted by law in 15 states as well as in Washington, D.C.

3.3.1.2. EU-USA

Agreement between the USA and the EU on the huge importance of Trans-Atlantic relations continues to form the basis for mutual cooperation in a wide range of political and economic policy areas. The negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) were opened in Brussels in July. In this context, the Federal Government underlines the importance of transparent negotiations and supports a public debate on TTIP. In the deliberations on negotiation mandates for EU trade and investment agreements and in the negotiations on the latter, the Federal Government furthermore advocates the inclusion of the commitment to observing high social and ecological minimum standards.

At the same time, the relationship of trust between the USA and the EU and its Member States was strained by Edward Snowden's revelations regarding American intelligence activities. In the context of a working group, numerous discussions between experts from both sides were held in the second half of the year, which dealt with the type and scope of surveillance activities carried out by US intelligence services. A final report was completed at the end of November.

3.3.1.3. Bilateral Relations between Austria and the USA

Bilateral relations between Austria and the US continued to develop positively. The regular exchange of visits at diplomatic level and the very good level of cooperation in multi-lateral bodies (UN, HRC) is particularly noteworthy. Vienna, as the home to many international organisations (especially UN, OSCE, IAEA), has again proven to be an important hub. Austria's expertise as an active political player and important economic factor and investor in Central Europe, the Danube region and the Balkans is appreciated by the USA.
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

There are also wide-ranging opportunities for cooperation in the field of science and innovation. The Austrian Office of Science and Technology (OST) at the Austrian embassy in Washington, for instance, provides services to an interdisciplinary network of scientists and together with other Austrian representations promotes cooperation among scientific institutions. Ongoing contacts with elite universities such as Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Columbia, MIT, New York University and City University New York were continued. The Center for Austrian Culture and Commerce (Center Austria) at the University of New Orleans and the Center for Austrian Studies at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis/St. Paul continued their successful study and teaching programmes. The Austrian Marshall Plan Foundation intensified its successful cooperation with US partner universities. Ten US-American experts participated in this year’s George C. Marshall visit on the topic of “Advanced Manufacturing/Access to Innovation, Securing the Talent Pipeline”.

In the cultural field, the cultural fora in New York and Washington are well-established centres for the ongoing presentation of contemporary Austrian art and culture. Apart from focusing on cultural and educational policy content, the around 300 events that were supported and/or organised by the cultural fora dealt mainly with current topics of social policy and cross-cultural relevance such as violence, environmental protection, migration, integration of migrants, inter-cultural dialogue and linguistic diversity. Both cultural fora also belong to the respective local EUNIC clusters, which regularly present joint Europe-related events.

The development and expansion of positive and future-oriented relations with the Jewish Community is a central concern of the Austrian representations in the USA. Considering the density of organisations this holds especially true for the Austrian Consulate-General in New York in whose jurisdiction the headquarters of the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee (AJC), the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish American Organizations, the Anti-Defamation League and B’nai B’rith are located. There is also close cooperation with the Holocaust museums especially in Washington and Los Angeles where Austrian Holocaust Memorial Service representatives are active.

The provision of social and legal services to those Austrians who were forced to flee from Nazi persecution to the USA following Austria’s “Anschluss” in 1938 remains an important task for all Austrian representations. The implementation of the comprehensive restitution and reparation measures, which Austria committed itself to under the Washington Agreement in 2001, continues to be followed closely by the US administration. The Austrian efforts towards the restitution of art objects, the provision of nursing services funding to needy Holocaust survivors and Austria’s role in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA, formerly ITF) are very much welcomed by the USA.
The dialogue with the “Young Leaders” of the American Jewish Committee (AJC, ACCESS-DC) launched in 2010 was further intensified and expanded. The second trip to Austria for young leaders and university graduates participating in the AJC-ACCESS Programme was organised in cooperation with the Jewish Welcome Service and the AJC and took place in June. In December, the already traditional Chanukka celebrations held by AJC-ACCESS were hosted in Washington and New York.

On the website www.jewishnews.at, the Press and Information Service of the Austrian Embassy in Washington publishes the English online newsletter “Jewish News from Austria” and also makes available English translations of relevant articles published in the Austrian media. The website also includes information on and references to all aspects of Jewish life in Austria as well as on activities and institutions in connection with addressing and coming to terms with the Holocaust, Holocaust memorial services and current restitution issues.

More in-depth information on and about Austria and bilateral relations between Austria and the USA is provided in the publication “Austrian Information”, published since 1948 by the press and information service. The newly designed print edition has a circulation of currently 11,000 issues, is published three times a year and is also available online at www.austrian-information.org. In addition, an electronic newsletter (“Austrian Dispatch”) providing the latest news and constantly updated information on the representation authorities’ activities is sent out once a month per email. On top of the publication currently available, the press and information service expanded its portfolio in the field of the new media (Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and now also Pinterest) and on the internet. Besides its website www.austria.org, which is one of the most frequently visited websites on Austria in the USA, the Embassy has now also launched the websites “Taste of Austria” (Austrian cuisine, sustainable farming, “coffee house culture”, etc.) and “Projekt 175” (175 years of diplomatic relations Austria-USA, in cooperation with the US Embassy in Vienna and the Center Austria at the University of New Orleans).

An American-Austrian exchange of journalists, initiated in 2007 by the International Center for Journalists and the Austrian Board for Journalist Education was organised for the seventh time in the last quarter of the year.

### 3.3.2. Canada

#### 3.3.2.1. General Developments

The conservative government, which holds an absolute majority and is led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, maintained its focus on strengthening the economy, which due to the global economic situation, grew more slowly than expected. The country’s GDP growth reached only 1.6% and the unem-
Employment rate remained almost unchanged compared with previous years at 7%. The government’s main target remains budget consolidation by 2015, which is to be achieved in particular through public expenditure cuts.

The main item on Canada’s foreign policy agenda is intensifying economic relations, mainly through negotiating free trade agreements (CETA with the EU), accession to the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the opening of bilateral free trade negotiations with India and Japan, as well as signing several investment protection agreements. In the field of security, Canada continued to maintain close relations with traditional allies, and pursues a more pronounced Arctic policy. Canada also very emphatically promotes strengthening freedom and democracy i.e. human rights, rule of law and protection of religious minorities.

3.3.2.2. EU-Canada

The relations between Canada and the EU, which are based on a Framework Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (1976) and the EU-Canada Partnership Agenda of 2004, have evolved into a close strategic partnership. Negotiations on the related Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which is to provide a new basis for this cooperation and aims to reflect the entire bandwidth and intensity of relations, are now in their final stage.

In October, political agreement was reached on the key elements of a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), which is to become the EU’s most ambitious free trade agreement to date. CETA provides for the abolishment of 99.2% of EU customs duties on Canadian imports and of 98.8% of Canadian customs duties on imports from the EU.

Furthermore, the EU’s Industrialised Countries Instrument 2007–2013 also enabled active support of EU centres at three Canadian universities. In November, another such centre was opened at the University of Edmonton, which also hosts the Wirth-Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies.

3.3.2.3. Bilateral Austro-Canadian Relations

Austria and Canada maintain particularly intense relations in the fields of business and culture. Canada is Austria’s sixth-largest export market overseas. Some 100 Austrian companies have subsidiaries in Canada, while about 40 Canadian companies are active in Austria. Austria enjoys a very positive image as a cultural nation and is held in particularly high regard in the field of classical music. Some 5,000 holders of Austrian passports and about 70,000 people who consider themselves to be “Austrians at heart” contribute to the positive image enjoyed by Austria in Canada.
3.3.3. Latin America and the Caribbean

3.3.3.1. General Developments

The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), established in December 2011, held its summit on 28 January in Santiago de Chile. At this meeting, Chile handed over the community’s annually rotating pro tempore presidency to Cuba. CELAC’s main tasks are the promotion of political, economic, social and cultural integration of the states of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The CELAC region is an important economic partner for the EU. It boasts high growth rates both in bi-regional trade and in exports. The EU is the largest investor in Latin America and the Caribbean. Thanks to structural reform, a well-organised banking sector and high raw material prices, the region has withered the global economic and financial crisis of the last few years remarkably well, demonstrating a remarkable resilience.

In the second half of the year, Venezuela took over the chair of the Market of the South (MERCOSUR) from Uruguay. The 45th MERCOSUR Summit was held in Montevideo on 12 July.

In May, Colombia took over the pro tempore presidency of the Pacific Alliance set up in 2011. The organisation’s foremost goal is the establishment of a free trade area including a customs union, freedom to travel and visa-free travel between its members (Chile, Peru, Colombia, and Mexico).

3.3.3.2. EU-LAC

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) are classified as a partner region that is important and close to the EU. The EU-LAC process that has been institutionalised since 1999 is an important engine for bi-regional relations between the EU and Latin America as well as the Caribbean. Since its inception in December 2011, CELAC has been the EU’s contact partner in this bi-regional process. The summit meetings at the Heads of State and Government level take place every two years. The 1st EU-CELAC summit (and the 7th EU-LAC summit) took place in Santiago de Chile on 26 and 27 January. This summit was the first the EU has held with CELAC since the establishment of this new regional organisation. The meeting was organised by Chile, which currently holds the organisation’s rotating chair, and focused on “Investment for sustainable development” and “Promoting growth and stability”. A common political declaration on bi-regional cooperation and two new chapters of the Action Plan (investment and women’s affairs) were adopted. From the Austrian point of view, the summit produced positive results: energy and environmental issues as well as women’s affairs (equal treatment; protection against violence) will be future highlights. The next summit is scheduled for 2015 and will be held in Brussels.
The EU-LAC Foundation, which was established in 2011, has already successfully taken up its comprehensive activities. The foundation’s main task is to foster institutional cooperation between the EU and the Latin American and Caribbean region. More specifically, it is to serve as a permanent contact between EU-CELAC summit meetings. Furthermore, it is planned to turn the EU-LAC Foundation into an international organisation based on an international agreement. At the EU-CELAC summit in January, the Heads of State and Government called for bringing the negotiations to a rapid conclusion.

The EU continues to adhere to the concept of a sub-regional approach based on association or economic partnership agreements in order to promote regional integration of the LAC partners and to improve the legal framework conditions for trade relations and investments. The EU’s central policy focus in this context is on contributing towards strengthening stability, prosperity and social cohesion in Latin America and the Caribbean, establishing a common area of higher education and fighting drugs and organised crime. The EU maintains a dense network of contractual relations with the LAC region: association agreements with Mexico (2000) and Chile (2002) as well as Strategic Partnerships and Action Plans with Brazil (2007) and Mexico (2008). The implementation of the EU Free Trade Agreements with Colombia and Peru, as well as the Association Agreements with six Central American countries (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama) continued to play a key role.

Since the Fourth EU-LAC Summit was held in Vienna in 2006, bilateral relations between Austria and the region have witnessed ongoing positive development. The number of high-level visits has constantly increased: after Federal President Heinz Fischer had paid official visits to Argentina and Chile in December 2012, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann and State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka participated in January in the EU-CELAC Summit in Chile where they also held bilateral talks. Austria maintains good and friendly relations with the countries in the region. Austrian business also benefits from the growing economic importance enjoyed by the Latin American and Caribbean region, which is characterised by sound financial structures and an enormous wealth of natural resources. Austrian exports to the majority of the countries in the region have continued to experience sound increases. Another hallmark of bilateral relations is good cooperation with most of the countries in the science and research sectors.

3.3.3.3. Developments in the Individual Countries

3.3.3.3.1. Argentina

In the by-elections to parliament held on 27 October, 127 of the 257 MPs and 24 of the 72 senators were newly elected. Although the governing coalition Frente para la Victoria (FPV) led by President Cristina Fernández de Kirch-
America

America suffered losses, it continued to remain the strongest power in the country and succeeded in retaining its narrow majority in both chambers of Congress. In October, the country’s Supreme Court ratified the law on the reorganisation of the media landscape. In June, the controversial reform of the judiciary was thwarted by the Supreme Court, which rejected some of the reform’s key elements. Unemployment, inflation and high crime rates as well as tighter import and foreign exchange restrictions triggered protests and social unrest.

3.3.3.3.2. Belize

In the border conflict between Belize and Guatemala, the latter on 23 April suspended the referendum on the settlement of the long-standing territorial dispute scheduled for 6 October and brought the case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The referendum should have taken place in both countries at the same time.

3.3.3.3.3. Bolivia

In February, Bolivia re-acceded to the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, subject to the right to reserve. The stopover of President of State Juan Evo Morales at Vienna-Schwechat Airport on 3 July attracted international attention. President Morales announced that he intends to stand again for presidential elections in 2014.

3.3.3.3.4. Brazil

The main goals pursued by the government led by President Dilma Rousseff remain fighting poverty, a better distributional justice and the country’s technical modernisation, inter alia with an ambitious foreign scholarship programme. In June and July, the country was caught in a wave of protests triggered by dissatisfaction with the increase in public transport ticket prices and the quality of public services.

Strengthening the role played by the country at international level – for instance through the election of the Brazilian diplomat Roberto Azevedo to the office of WTO Secretary-General – and South-South Cooperation remained important priorities. Other relevant international fora to which Brazil contributes include the G20, the IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) groups.

3.3.3.3.5. Chile

In January, Chile concluded the 2012 pro tempore presidency of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) by organising the first EU-CELAC Summit in which 60 states, 34 of which represented by their respective Heads of State and Government, participated, and the subsequent CELAC Summit. Chile was again elected Non-Permanent Member of the UN
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

Security Council (2014/2015) and is a member of the HRC (2011–2014). Predominant events at domestic policy level included ongoing students’ protests in favour of an affordable education system and – most of all the presidential elections – which were won by Michelle Bachelet in the second ballot.

3.3.3.3.6. Costa Rica
In November, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) passed a sentence on the border conflict between Costa Rica and Nicaragua concerning the Rio San Juan region. In 2014, Costa Rica will follow Cuba as pro tempore president of CELAC.

3.3.3.3.7. Guatemala
Guatemala held a seat on the UN Security Council for the 2012/2013 period. For further information on the border conflict with Belize please see section 3.3.3.3.2.

3.3.3.3.8. Haiti
In the context of its semi-annual debate, the UN Security Council dealt with the situation in the country. The UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2119 (2013) extending the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) and also providing for a reduction of its military strength.

3.3.3.3.9. Colombia
The most important item on the political agenda were the peace negotiations with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), which were opened in Oslo in December 2012 and have since been conducted in Havana. At the economic level, the focus was placed on the implementation of the comprehensive free trade agreement between the EU and Colombia. President Juan Manuel Santos announced that he intends to stand again as candidate for the presidential elections to be held in May 2014.

3.3.3.3.10. Cuba
Despite the problems faced by Cuba, the government led by Raúl Castro continued on its course towards gradual liberalisation of the country’s economy. The introduction of general travel freedom in January translated in increased popular migration. In the context of its CELAC presidency, Cuba strove to promote integration among Latin American and Caribbean states. Bilateral cooperation agreements were signed with some EU Member States.

3.3.3.3.11. Mexico
In its first year in government, the administration led by President Peña Nieto adopted ambitious reforms in the fields of education, finance, taxes, politics,
telecommunications and energy. They are to form the basis for economic upswing and sustainable growth. In September, Mexico was hit by a wave of disastrous flooding caused by Hurricane Ingrid and the tropical thunderstorm Manuel. The cleaning-up activities in the disaster-stricken areas have largely been completed.

3.3.3.3.12. Nicaragua

On 10 December, the constitutional reform enabling the unlimited re-election of the president of Nicaragua was approved in first reading by the country’s national assembly. The reform will enter into force in 2014. For further information on the border conflict with Costa Rica please see section 3.3.3.3.6.

3.3.3.3.13. Paraguay

The presidential elections held in Paraguay on 21 April were won by Horacio Cartes. The new president declared the fight against poverty, the promotion of education, employment, youth and women, as well as the fight against corruption, money laundering and drug trafficking as the priorities of his term in office. At the foreign policy level, relations between Paraguay and its neighbours which had been substantially impaired by the suspension of the country’s membership of MERCOSUR and the Union of South American States (UNASUR) in June 2012, saw a gradual normalisation. In December, Paraguay voted in favour of Venezuela’s membership of MERCOSUR.

3.3.3.3.14. Peru

Peru continued its successful economic upturn to which the implementation of the free trade agreement between the EU and Peru has also contributed. In December, Lima was the venue of the 15th General Conference organised by the Vienna-based UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

3.3.3.3.15. Uruguay

On 9 December, Uruguay adopted a bill legalising and regulating the sale of marijuana, making it the first country to legalise the production, sale and consumption of marijuana subject to government control.

3.3.3.3.16. Venezuela

The dominating event in Venezuela was the presidential elections on 14 April that had become necessary following the death of Head of State Hugo Chávez. His designated successor, Nicolás Maduro, won by a narrow margin ahead of the candidate proposed by the opposition platform. The governing party was again successful in the local elections held in December.
3.4. Asia

3.4.1. General Developments

Asia saw highly heterogeneous developments in 2013. Well-known trouble hot spots in the Middle East gave rise to tensions in the region, remaining a focus of the international community’s attention. The third year of the “Arab Spring” was again characterised by numerous conflicts and violent clashes, with the civil war in Syria marking the alarming climax of escalation. Although it was possible to keep the simmering conflicts in the Far East, especially on the Korean peninsula as well as in both the East and the South China Sea, under control, they – just like the situation in Afghanistan – were still far from being resolved. New leaders in some influential states in the region, such as Australia, China, Japan and Korea, launched activities with effects going beyond the region. Elections held in some of the states resulted in political changes with a wider impact especially in Iran. In South East Asia, people increasingly took to the streets, with protest movements in Thailand, Bangladesh and Cambodia posing an increasing challenge for the respective governments.

Overall, Asia experienced relatively sound and generally high-level economic growth-double digit growth rates are, however, a thing of the past even in Asia. Many middle-income countries underwent consolidation, and economic integration in the Far East and in Central Asia continued at sub-regional, regional and supra-regional level.

3.4.1.1. EU-Asia

3.4.1.1.1. ASEM and EU-ASEAN

Under the Indian chair the Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM), initiated in Bangkok in 1996, continued its dynamic development. In addition to a number of technical meetings, the 10th ASEM Customs Directors-General and Commissioners Meeting was held in Vienna from 17 to 18 October. From 10 to 11 November, the Indian city of Gurgaon (greater Delhi area) hosted the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. Under the heading of “ASEM: Bridge to Partnership for Growth and Development”, the meeting brought together 34 foreign ministers from Europe and Asia as well as EU HR Catherine Ashton. The Austrian delegation was headed by State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka. The main topics included “Economic Growth and Sustainable Development: Challenges and Opportunities in Asia and Europe” and non-traditional security issues.

The Singapore-based Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) established in 1997 and founded under private law, is an institution of ASEM. The 30th ASEF Board of Governors meeting was held in Singapore from 21 to 22 November. The EU further stepped up its commitment towards ASEAN. EU HR Catherine Ashton for instance participated in the 20th Ministerial Meeting of the
ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the most important forum for security issues in South East Asia (1 and 2 July, Brunei). Together with ASEAN, the EU organised a dialogue event on maritime cooperation in Jakarta on 18 and 19 November.

Negotiations between the EU and the individual ASEAN states on Partnership and Cooperation Agreements as well as Free Trade Agreements continued. In addition to the existing EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines, an agreement was initialled with Singapore in October. Negotiations were launched and/or continued with Thailand, Malaysia and Brunei.

Singapore was the first ASEAN state to initial a free trade agreement with the EU in September. Negotiations were continued with Malaysia and Vietnam and opened with Thailand in February.

3.4.1.1.2. People’s Republic of China

The 16th EU-China Summit held in Beijing on 20 and 21 November, marked the 10th anniversary of the Strategic Partnership. The EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation (Agenda 2020) adopted at the summit, provides for comprehensive cooperation projects including negotiations on an investment agreement. Furthermore, a comprehensive declaration on energy security was adopted and agreement on the establishment of a dialogue on innovation and on an urbanisation partnership was reached. The 32nd EU-China Human Rights Dialogue was held in Guizhou on 25 June. The EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis paid a visit to China in September.

3.4.1.1.3. India

The EU is India’s largest trading and investment partner and one of the country’s most important donors of development assistance. A cooperation agreement was signed in 1994 and since 2004 India has been one of the EU’s Strategic Partners. Regular summits and meetings at commissioner/minister and expert level are held to deepen cooperation in a large number of areas. At the 12th EU-India summit in February, both parties agreed on enhancing cooperation in the security area (the fight against terrorism and piracy, cyber security) and in the fields of energy, research and innovation. Again this year, it was, however, not possible to achieve a break-through in the negotiations on a free trade agreement launched in 2007.

3.4.1.1.4. Japan

Following intensive preparatory talks, parallel negotiations on a Strategic Partnership Agreement and a Free Trade Agreement were launched in
March. Since then, regular negotiation rounds on both agreements have been held on an alternating basis in Brussels and in Tokyo.

The Strategic Partnership Agreement aims to create a comprehensive basis for future cooperation between the EU and Japan. The objectives pursued by the Free Trade Agreement include improved market access and elimination of non-tariff trade barriers.

3.4.1.1.5. Central Asia

Relations between the EU and Central Asia are based on the EU-Central Asia Strategy, which was adopted in 2007 and updated in June 2012. Under this strategy the EU promotes seven priority areas and three regional initiatives in pursuing the goal of contributing to improving stability and security, fighting poverty and intensifying regional cooperation. The EU, which is one of the most important donors to the region, is providing funding of approximately 1 billion euro for the period 2014–2020.

The most important event scheduled for the year 2014 is the pull-out of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan. For this reason, the EU Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) and the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) programmes, which are directed towards long-term cooperation were intensified. The Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI) under the auspices of the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior and the European Commission is a common platform and clearing centre for the numerous bilateral, regional and multi-lateral border protection projects in Central Asia. With a view to further promoting cooperation in the security field, the first meeting of the EU-Central Asia High Level Security Dialogue between representatives of Central Asian states and the EU was held in Brussels.

A general problem, emanating not least from Afghanistan and increasingly faced by the region at large, is the rise in radical Islamism. Another issue with a high potential for conflict is water supply: the relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which are rich in water but economically weaker and Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, which are poor in water yet rich in other natural resources but require water for their water-intensive agriculture has traditionally been conflict-ridden.

Austria has not yet fully exploited the potential for cooperation with all states in the region. Apart from Kazakhstan, it is Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan (energy) in particular, that may come to play a role in this context.

See Chapter 4.2.2.6 for information on activities launched by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in Central Asia.
3.4.2. Developments in the Regions

3.4.2.1. The Near and the Middle East

The dramatic escalation of the civil war in Syria and unexpected turns taken by the conflict involving the Iranian nuclear programme were an important focus of Austria’s foreign policy attention. Another topic that featured equally high on Austria’s foreign policy agenda was the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process that had been launched twenty years ago in September. The civil war in Syria and its manifold internal fronts also entailed a visible social and political destabilisation in Lebanon and Iraq. This was mainly attributable to the large number of refugees who fled the country. Armed groups also transferred their conflicts to these countries and were in turn supported by foreign governments and individual fighters from abroad.

3.4.2.1.1. Israel/Palestinian Territories, Middle-East Peace Process

More than two years after the last direct talks between the Israeli and the Palestinian negotiation teams had broken down, the new US Secretary of State John Kerry at the end of July succeeded with an extremely high level of personal commitment in initiating new negotiations on establishing lasting peace in the Middle East. This new development was fully endorsed and supported by the EU.

As a confidence-building measure for the new negotiation process, Israel committed itself to releasing Palestinian long-term prisoners, i.e. individuals who had been arrested and sentenced prior to the conclusion of the Oslo Agreement of 1993. In turn, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) refrained from engaging in initiatives at international level and in the UN context that focused on Palestine’s membership of specialised agencies or organisations.

The Palestinians did not link the central issue of Israeli settlement construction in the Occupied Territories with participation in the talks even though the topic continues to be of utmost relevance for the outcome of the negotiations.

The parties agreed that the process was to be subject to the highest possible level of confidentiality and this was indeed consistently observed until the end of the year. In view of a lack of interim results, repeated Israeli announcements relating to the construction of new settlements and a low level of confidence reflected in public opinion on both sides, Secretary of State Kerry announced at the end of the year that he intended to submit a draft on a negotiation framework. Within this framework it could be possible – if necessary – to extend the term for detailed discussions beyond the nine months originally agreed upon.

The EU has dispatched two civilian CSDP missions to the Palestinian Territories: the Police mission EUPOL COPPS, which supports the Palestinian
civilian police forces and criminal justice system, and the EU Border Assistance Mission EUBAM Rafah at the Rafah border crossing. This mission was established in 2005 to monitor the border traffic to Egypt but has been on stand-by since Hamas took over power in the Gaza Strip in mid-2007.

3.4.2.1.2. Syria

Throughout the entire year, the parties to the conflict in the Syrian civil war continued to seek a military solution. By the end of the year, more than 100,000 people had lost their lives. With more than 6 million internally displaced persons and more than 2 million refugees in the neighbouring countries, almost half of Syria’s population was fleeing from combat and fighting.

The original claim of bringing about a democratisation of the political system, as in the other Arab Spring countries, fell victim to the merciless fight for military control over cities and rural areas. While the opposition was still unable to agree on common objectives in order to offer people a real alternative to the regime, the latter resorted to increasingly radical means. The suspicion that chemical weapons had been used was repeatedly voiced and subsequently also confirmed by a mission dispatched by the UN; human rights observers reported war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The EU renewed its restrictive measures against the Syrian regime but enabled arms deliveries by individual Member States to the opposition coalition (Syrian National Coalition of Opposition and Revolutionary Forces), provided that they served the protection of civilians.

A Russian-American initiative towards convening an international conference on Syria in Geneva at the beginning of May opened up the prospect of launching a political process. The actual invitation to the conference by the UNSG was thwarted by the question of who was to represent the opposition. Another issue that remained unresolved was the question of international participants, especially with regard to Iran. The conference’s central objective, i.e. the implementation of the action plan as set out in the Geneva Communiqué of 2012, was subject to controversial interpretation by the parties to the conflict even after the conference’s definite starting date (22 January 2014) had been announced. The parties’ interpretation diverged especially with regard to the future of Syria’s President whose replacement was considered a sine qua non for a political process by the regime’s opposition.

The conflict was kindled not least by active influence exercised on the part of regional powers and evolved into a form of a proxy war between Shia and Sunni alliances. In the UNSC, the issue of Syria triggered patterns of confrontation between its Permanent Members that related to regional strategic interests but also called to mind conflicts among major powers witnessed in decades past.

The possibility of a US military strike (to be carried out in collaboration with potential allies) against Syria in response to the repeated suspicions of chem-
Asia

ical weapons use led in a positive turn to an agreement between the USA and the Russian Federation that the destruction of the chemical weapons arsenal in Syria was imperative. With cooperation from Syria and based on UNSC resolution 2118 of 27 September, a joint mission by the UN and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was set up and a work programme was prepared based on which all Syrian chemical weapons were to be destroyed by mid-2014. The milestones defined until the end of the year were largely achieved. Austria provided both human resources and air transport capacity for this programme.

3.4.2.1.3. Iran

In June, Hassan Rohani won the presidential elections obtaining 50.71% of votes thus succeeding Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who was not able to run for a third term. Rohani’s open attitude towards the West and his declared efforts towards an economically more stable and freer country has filled many Iranians with hope.

Iran has so far not succeeded in dissipating the doubts that have persisted for several years about the exclusively civilian and peaceful character of its nuclear programme. The encouraging Geneva interim agreement of 24 November and the beginning of its implementation on 20 January 2014, have nourished hopes that after a long period of deadlock, a negotiation solution may be found for all open issues regarding the Iranian nuclear programme.

Since Rohani’s election some first positive signals have been discernible in the field of human rights: in September, for instance, a number of human rights defenders were released, including the lawyer and Sakharov Prize winner Nasrin Sotoudeh. On the other hand, however, numerous political prisoners remain in prison and no progress was made on the majority of other human rights-related issues, such as the death penalty, oppression of the freedom of opinion or the persecution of religious minorities and especially of the Bahá’í. For this reason Austria, both bilaterally and also within the UN, continues to push for a sustainable improvement of the human rights situation in Iran.

The comprehensive sanctions imposed by the EU against Iran are divided into two regimes, one of which relates to the Iranian nuclear programme and the other to the human rights situation in Iran. The sanctions imposed by the UNSC in reaction to the nuclear programme have from 2010 on been gradually tightened by additional restrictive autonomous measures imposed by the EU in a number of economic areas (including the oil embargo). In implementing the Geneva interim agreement, a temporary suspension of some of the sanctions was agreed on for the first time (for instance the ban on transport and on insurance of Iranian oil; the embargo on petro-chemical products, gold and precious metals; raising the value ceiling for money trans-
Challenges and Developments on all Five Continents

3.4.2.1.4. Iraq
Developments in Iraq were characterised by a deterioration in the security situation and an extremely high level of violence combined with elements of a deep political crisis and a rise in sectarian violence. Likewise, it was not possible to settle the crisis – which is primarily attributable to lack of agreement on the distribution of income from oil and gas sales – between the central government and the autonomous region Kurdistan-Iraq. These developments were further aggravated by the regional crisis. The massive rise in executions in Iraq since 2012 was also cause for concern. Despite rising oil and gas production volumes, the supply level enjoyed by the population remained inadequate.

The Integrated Rule of Law Mission EUJUST LEX established in 2005 by the EU expired at the end of the year.

3.4.2.2. Arab Peninsula
In Yemen, the National Dialogue Conference continued work on elaborating a new constitution under which the country’s individual regions will, for instance, be granted greater autonomy.

Bahrain again saw protests against the crown. The island state’s government reacted by resorting to police violence.

3.4.2.3. Afghanistan
Twelve years after the toppling of the Taliban the situation in Afghanistan remained confusing and extremely insecure. The Taliban and associated groups attacked Western trainers of the Afghan security forces and other targets attracting large-scale media coverage. The situation in Afghanistan, especially the withdrawal of ISAF and tensions between the individual states in the region meant that the security situation in Central Asia was at times quite tense.

In the context of its quarterly debate, the UNSC dealt with the situation in Afghanistan and in the course of the year it also issued several press statements condemning the terrorist attacks. By adopting resolution 2096 (2013) in March, the UNSC extended the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for another 12 months. The UNSC also extended the authorisation of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) until the end of the year under resolution 2120 (2013).

The withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan continued despite the instable security situation in large parts of the country. ISAF was gradu-
ally handing over responsibility for security to Afghan security authorities, a process which is to be completed by 2014. Beyond that date, a NATO-led engagement will provide support to the country, provided that the necessary agreements on the status and the security of the remaining troops can be concluded with Afghanistan.

By the end of the year, ISAF troop strength totalled about 57,000. Austria seconded three staff officers to the ISAF headquarters in Kabul. The ISAF’s mandate covered provision of support to the Afghan government in enforcing and maintaining internal security and respect for human rights as well as training and supporting the Afghan security forces. In the context of the Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC), ISAF also contributed towards providing reconstruction assistance.

Austria pledged to provide a total of 18 million euros over three years to strengthen law enforcement (police system) based on the rule of law in Afghanistan.

The EU Police Mission (EUPOL Afghanistan), active in the country since 2007, was mandated with assisting the Afghan government in building up an independent civil police force that meets international standards. Austria supported this mission by seconding five police officers.

3.4.2.4. Central Asia
3.4.2.4.1. Kazakhstan

After President of State Nursultan Nazarbayev had very unambiguously criticised the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the latter’s poor implementation of his instructions, a government reshuffle was undertaken in November.

Relations between Kazakhstan and the EU are based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) that was signed in 1995, entered into force in 1999 and expired in 2009. As was the case in 2011 and 2012, rounds of negotiations on a new, expanded PCA were also held in 2013.

From an economic point of view, Kazakhstan is (after Russia and the Ukraine) the third-most important CIS market for Austria.

3.4.2.4.2. Kyrgyzstan

At the end of May, riots again flared up at the economically important Kumtor goldmine. Demonstrations in favour of its nationalisation led to road blocks and disruption in the region’s electricity supply by demonstrators. In response to these developments, President of State Almazbek Atambayev imposed a state of emergency on the region from 31 May to 10 June. Since the summer, rioting directed against the agreement between the government and the Canadian goldmine operator Centerra has escalated.
Following the ethnic clashes in the south of the country in 2010, the situation has calmed down for the time being but remains tense and unstable. There are still ethnically motivated clashes between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks. At the beginning of the year, violent clashes in the regions Batken and Sokh led to another closing of the Kyrgyz-Uzbek border in the Ferghana valley. In the light of the rather dull economic prospects, almost 500,000 Kyrgyzs left their home country in the course of the year heading mainly towards the Russian Federation.

In June, the traditionally Russia-friendly Kyrgyzstan applied for membership of the Eurasian Customs Union between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

In April, Federal President Heinz Fischer, together with the Second President of the Austrian National Council Fritz Neugebauer and Federal Minister Alois Stöger, travelled to Kyrgyzstan, making him the first western President of State to pay a visit to the country.

3.4.2.4.3. Tajikistan
The presidential elections on 6 November were won by the incumbent Emomali Rahmon obtaining 83.6% of the votes cast. Although the election process was not affected by incidents and international election observation was possible without encumbrance, the OSCE’s ODIHR stated that Tajikistan still had to work towards reaching international standards in the fields of electoral law and democracy. In the wake of the presidential elections the Tajik government was subject to a major reshuffle.

Tajikistan has huge water reserves but due to lack of investment only a small part is currently used. The completion of the 3,660 megawatt hydro power plant in Rogun, the construction of which started back in Soviet Union times, thus enjoys utmost priority for Tajikistan. The project is, however, met with fierce resistance on the part of Uzbekistan, which fears negative impacts on its water-intensive agriculture.

Relations between the EU and Tajikistan are based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that was signed in 2004 and entered into force in 2010. The EU’s commitment is mainly focused on the social and healthcare sector, private sector development and the improvement of the public financial administration.

In April, Federal President Heinz Fischer, accompanied by the Second President of the Austrian National Council Fritz Neugebauer and Federal Minister Alois Stöger, was the first Western President of State to pay a visit to Tajikistan.

3.4.2.4.4. Turkmenistan
At the parliamentary elections held on 15 December, voters were for the first time able to choose between parties: apart from the Democratic Party
of Turkmenistan (DPT) led by Head of State Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, the Party of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (which is also considered pro-government) stood as candidate for the 125 seats in parliament. The DPT won the elections but for the first time lost the parliamentary majority.

3.4.2.4.5. Uzbekistan

In September, the Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Uzbekistan as part of his Central Asia trip. In this context a number of agreements were signed and by 2017 trade volumes are to be increased to five billion US dollars. China, which is about to replace Russia as the country’s largest trading partner is also an important buyer of Uzbek natural gas, which reduces the country’s dependence on the Russian market.

In the neighbourhood, relations are most difficult with Tajikistan whose plans to expand and construct hydro power plants nourish fears of negative impacts on Uzbekistan’s agriculture. Uzbekistan is against the construction of the large-scale hydro power plant Rogun, which is being massively pushed by Tajikistan (see Section 3.4.2.4.3.). Relations with Kyrgyzstan are also strained, which is on the one hand attributable to hydro power plant projects (Kambar Ata dam along the Naryn River), and on the other hand to conflicts resulting from the complex course of the borderline. Ethnic tensions lead to repeated clashes in the border regions (see Section 3.4.2.4.2.). Relations with Kazakhstan have improved. During the visit Kazakh President Nazarbajev paid to Uzbekistan in June, the two countries inter alia signed a strategic partnership agreement. Relations with Afghanistan are good. However, Uzbeks fear that the withdrawal of ISAF at the end of 2014 will have a destabilising effect on their home country and the region at large.

On 6 May, bilateral political consultations chaired by Secretary-General Kyrle and First Deputy Foreign Minister Norov were held in Vienna.

Since the beginning of the year, the Austrian Stefan Priesner has been the UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator in Tashkent.

3.4.2.5. Nord East Asia

3.4.2.5.1. People’s Republic of China

In November, the landmark Third Plenary Session of the 18th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China – the first to be held under the new leadership – defined new guidelines for a domestic policy change “towards a sustainable path to balanced social development” until 2020. The planned comprehensive reforms relate not only to business, finance and social aspects, but also to the rule of law and the judiciary. Improvements were also announced with regard to the one-child-policy and the re-education camps. China strives to combine a foreign policy approach that is based on economic power and “real politics” with the “soft power” of a developing coun-
try that has lifted millions of people out of poverty. The main principles thus observed are the re-establishment and/or preservation of national unity, safeguarding the process of Chinese modernisation at an external level and the principle of non-interference in internal affairs. Diplomatic relations with Japan were strained by the visits members of the Japanese cabinet and Prime Minister Abe had paid to the Yasukuni shrine in spring and at the end of December respectively. Both sides claim sovereignty over the Senkaku/Diaoyu group of islands in the East China Sea. The establishment of an Air Defence Identification Zone in November was presented by China as a reaction to the expansion of the Japanese zone in May.

In Macao, the fourth parliamentary elections since its hand-over to China in 1999 were held on 15 September and led to a strengthening of the pro-Beijing camp.

3.4.2.5.2. Japan

On 21 July, parliamentary elections were held for half of the 242 seats in the House of Councillors (Upper House). The governing coalition composed of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and New Komeito succeeded in winning 76 of the 121 seats. The government led by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe thus now has a majority in both houses, the House of Councillors and the House of Representatives. Although the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) again suffered massive losses it remained the second largest party in the upper house.

The government led by PM Abe continued to attach key importance to economic policy reform. A characteristic feature of the government’s related approach is “Abenomics”, i.e. a relaxation of monetary policy combined with measures towards stimulating the economy. Investment by the private sector is encouraged, for instance by the provision of an additional budget for infrastructure projects. The deflationary measures launched yielded some initial modest success, large-scale structural reform is, however, still to come. The dramatic drop in the Yen exchange rate did not really succeed in boosting exports. A surge in energy imports, which became necessary because nuclear power plants had been shut down, faced Japan with the first balance of trade deficit in more than thirty years. Against this background, the government refrained from further pursuing the planned nuclear phase-out. The focus is thus now on putting nuclear power plants back into operation and substantially increasing safety levels.

At foreign policy level, maintaining and strengthening the security alliance with the USA and managing the difficult relationship with China and the two Koreas are key constants on Japan’s agenda. The third North-Korean nuclear test on 12 February was registered with great concern by Japan. In the long-standing territorial conflict with China in the East China Sea the fact that China, without giving advance notice, established an Air Defence Zone – that
overlapped to some extent with the Japanese zone – was the cause of further resentment. On 17 December, the government adopted a new National Security Strategy. While the strategy remains guided by the concept of deeply rooted pacifism, the defence budget has at the same time been somewhat increased and a more active role is to be played in terms of self-defence and international peace operations.

3.4.2.5.3. Republic of Korea

On 25 February the first female Head of State of the Republic of Korea, Park Geun-hye took office. The situation on the Korean peninsula was characterised by renewed tensions, triggered by a North Korean nuclear test in February. In view of these circumstances, the six-party talks (Republic of Korea, Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the USA) were not resumed. The alliance with the USA continues to play a central role in the country’s foreign policy concept. After relations between the Republic of Korea and China had improved at the beginning of the year (state visit to China in June), they were overshadowed by China’s establishment of an Air Defence Zone that overlapped to some extent with the Korean zone. Due to tensions with Japan that were attributable to regional and historic issues, there were no high-level meetings between the two countries. By hosting the high-level (third) Conference on Cyberspace in Seoul 2013 and due to its election to the UNSC for the period 2013/14, the Republic of Korea was able to position itself successfully on the international stage.

3.4.2.5.4. Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)

After the third nuclear test on 12 February, ruler Kim Jong-un declared his principal readiness to resume the nuclear disarmament talks, which had been stalled for years, in exchange for aid shipments. Ahead of this, however, the USA and other states, want to see clear signs that Pyongyang is actually delivering on its commitment to disarmament. Irrespective of the sanctions imposed by the UN, North Korea continues to further develop its nuclear arms programme. On 7 March, the UNSC adopted resolution 2094 (2013) condemning the nuclear test as a violation of previous resolutions and tightening the existing sanctions. In April, a Commission of Inquiry was set up by the HRC to investigate systematic, widespread and grave human rights violations in North Korea. On 12 December, the Vice Chairman of the National Defence Commission and uncle of Kim Jong-un, Jang Song-thaek, was executed after having been tried by a special military tribunal.

3.4.2.5.5. Mongolia

The presidential elections held on 26 June were won by the incumbent Tsakhiagiyn Elbegdorj, who was elected for a second term in office with 50.2% of votes. Mongolia concluded its two-year presidency of the Commu-
nity of Democracies by hosting the 7th Ministerial Meeting in Ulan Bator in April. In order to attract foreign investors, an investment act that will enter into force in 2014 was adopted in October. At the end of April, EU HR Catherine Ashton signed the EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Mongolia in Ulan Bator.

3.4.2.6. South and South East Asia

3.4.2.6.1. Bangladesh

The domestic policy climate in Bangladesh remained strained by the controversy between the governing Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina and the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party led by Khaleda Zia. The sentencing of opposition members by special war crimes tribunals set up to investigate crimes committed during the 1971 war of independence and the abolition of the system of holding parliamentary elections under a neutral caretaker government led to repeated violent clashes between the two camps.

3.4.2.6.2. Bhutan

In the wake of the second lower house elections in its history, the Kingdom of Bhutan saw a change of government: the former opposition party People's Democratic Party (PDP) led by Tshering Tobgay obtained 32 out of the 47 seats, replacing Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) that had governed the country for the last five years. The concept of Gross National Happiness remained a key element in the government programme. At foreign and economic policy level – particularly in the field of hydro power – the country continued to take its lead from India.

3.4.2.6.3. India

With a view to the parliamentary elections due to be held in spring 2014, the government sought to boost economic growth while at the same time improving social indicators. The domestic policy situation was, however, overshadowed by corruption scandals and reform backlog. Economic growth remained behind expectations and inflation rates were still high. The main topic on India's foreign policy agenda was strengthening relations with its neighbours. As the regional power in South Asia, India strove to exercise a stabilising impact on the volatile political situation on the Maldives, in Nepal and in Bangladesh, and to convince Sri Lanka to undertake greater efforts towards seeking a political solution to its internal ethnic conflict.

India also strove to raise its foreign policy profile as an emerging major power and as a leading country in the context of the Non-Aligned Movement and in other international fora such as the G20, the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and as one of the larg-
Asia

India also focused on cooperating closely with the USA and other Western partners in the joint fight against terrorism and in the field of civil nuclear cooperation. In the armaments area India, being one of the largest arms importers worldwide and having traditionally cooperated closely with Russia in this respect, likewise strove to step up cooperation with the West.

3.4.2.6.4. Indonesia

In the course of the year, the country’s domestic policy increasingly focused on the elections scheduled for 2014 with the fight against corruption being one of the dominating topics. The anti-corruption authority KPK succeeded in raising its profile and in the course of the year brought charges against a number of high-level politicians including the president of the constitutional court. Investigators also set their sights on influential figures in President Yudhoyono’s “Partai Demokrat”. The Governor of Djakarta, who was elected in 2012, succeeding in making his mark with his policy focus on people and reforms.

3.4.2.6.5. Cambodia

The controversial elections in summer sparked off a major domestic policy crisis in Cambodia. The opposition, which accused the government of massive electoral fraud, refused to cooperate with long-term Prime Minister Hun Sen. There were repeated violent clashes between demonstrators and police forces, which also resulted in loss of life.

3.4.2.6.6. Malaysia

The key topic in Malaysia were the parliamentary elections of 5 May, in which the governing alliance Barisan Nasional (BN), that has remained in power since 1957, only won by a very narrow majority. Reacting not least to the electoral outcome, Prime Minister Najib, who has governed the country since 2009, has focused on a more inclusive policy approach comprising all of the country’s ethnic groups. This approach is inter alia reflected in the “1Malaysia” campaign that aims to emphasise the communalities between the different ethnic groups.

3.4.2.6.7. Maldives

One and a half years after the controversial assumption of power on the Maldives by Mohamed Waheed in February 2012 and having been postponed several times, the second ballot for the presidential elections was eventually held in November. With 51.39% of votes, Abdulla Yameen, a half-brother of the former long-standing ruler Gayoom, succeeded in winning over former President Mohamed Nasheed who had resigned in February 2012.
3.4.2.6.8. Myanmar
In Myanmar, the government led by President Thein Sein continued the far-reaching political and economic reforms launched after the elections in November 2010 and was also able to secure a cease-fire for the major part of the country. In December, a political compromise seemed to be emerging on the amendment of numerous provisions in the country’s constitution that had been subject to controversy ever since its adoption in 2008.

3.4.2.6.9. Nepal
The political situation in Nepal remained fragile. After lengthy delays, elections were eventually held in November in which the governing Maoists came off surprisingly badly and the centrist National Congress became the strongest party. Government formation, however, proved difficult and core elements in connection with the elaboration of a new constitution remained unresolved.

3.4.2.6.10. Pakistan
Although Pakistan registered some success in combating terrorism, the country was shaken by attacks that claimed many lives. The fight against terrorism tied up a major part of the country’s resources and means. On 11 May, parliamentary elections were held and clearly won by the largest opposition party PML-N led by Nawaz Sharif. For the third time in his political career, Nawaz Sharif thus took office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. These elections marked a turning point in the history of Pakistan as it was the first time that a civilian government handed over power following a democratically legitimised process to a civilian government.

The process of detente between Pakistan and India was continued with great caution, without, however, resolving the major underlying problems. Both countries focused on visa, business and trade issues. The dialogue process was obstructed again and again by numerous incidents along the ceasefire line (Line of Control) in Kashmir.

3.4.2.6.11. Philippines
The government in the Philippines had to cope with a number of crises. In September it was faced with an uprising initiated by the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) on Mindanao, in October with the consequences of a disastrous earthquake on the islands of Bohol and Cebu. At the beginning of November, it had to deal with the impacts of the disastrous mega-typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan, which hit large parts at the centre of the country particularly hard. Apart from the crisis management necessary to handle the effects of these events, the government’s list of priorities included the fight against poverty and curbing corruption. Progress was made in the negotiations with
Asia

the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) aimed at establishing a new autonomous political entity on Mindanao (Bangsamoro). The peace process with the Communist rebels, however, failed to produce results. At foreign policy level, the government in January initiated international arbitration proceedings which are to decide on competing sovereignty claims with China in the South China Sea.

3.4.2.6.12. Sri Lanka

Since the end of the civil war and the military victory over the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May 2009, Sri Lanka has been able to make progress at economic level, in the fields of reconstruction, reintegration of former rebel fighters and resettlement of internally displaced persons and also in improving the general safety and security situation. Nevertheless, the country is still faced with the difficult challenge of finding a political solution to a conflict that had persisted over decades between the Tamil minority and the Singhalese majority population.

The government answered the international community’s calls for more justice, accountability and reconciliation after the end of the bloody civil war by pointing to what had been achieved so far and the successful conduct of regional elections in the Tamil dominated north of the country.

3.4.2.6.13. Thailand

Compared with the previous year, the domestic policy situation in Thailand rather tended to deteriorate. Socio-political conflicts, which are responsible for the political crisis the country has been going through for several years now, also continued to persist under the new government led by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, the sister of toppled former PM Takshin and towards the end of the year came even more strongly to the fore. In December, controversial amendments to the constitution propagated by the government led to mass protests, which were used by conservative opposition groups to call for the PM’s resignation. After weeks of demonstrations, Prime Minister Yingluck gave in to the pressure from the streets and dissolved parliament.

3.4.2.6.14. Timor-Leste

Timor-Leste is undergoing further consolidation after both the presidential and the 2012 parliamentary elections were largely conducted in an orderly way and in a peaceful atmosphere. The first year after the mandate of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), based in the country since 2006, had expired was politically calm. The main focus was on reconstructing the country and re-establishing its structures.
3.4.2.6.15. Vietnam

In Vietnam, the government primarily sought to stimulate the economy and implement the targets aimed at boosting economic growth. In autumn, the National Assembly adopted a new constitution, which leaves the existing political system unaltered. At foreign policy level, Vietnam continued its integration through its accession to international institutions. It took over the chair in the IAEA Board of Governors, for example, and was elected into the HRC. Bilateral relations with the USA were upgraded to a “comprehensive partnership”. In the territorial dispute with China involving the South China Sea, Vietnam stood firm and refused to back down on its position.

3.4.3. Regional Organisations

The ten member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened for their two annual summit meetings in the chair country Brunei. The summits were dedicated to the motto of “Our People, Our Future Together” (Bandar Seri Begawan, 24 and 25 April; 9 and 10 October) and focused in particular on the introduction of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the end of 2015. Another major topic was the development of integration post-2015 (Post-2015 Vision), in the context of which strengthening of institutions and bringing ASEAN closer to citizens play a major role.

Member states also agreed on opening negotiations on a Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) under which the existing free trade agreements between the ten ASEAN member states and China, Japan, South Korea, India, Australia and New Zealand are to be merged by 2015.

Official consultations based on the Declaration of Conduct of 2002 on the South China Sea were adopted at the 46th ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting on 29 and 30 June and agreed upon at the subsequent ASEAN-China Ministerial Meeting.

3.5. Australia and Oceania

3.5.1. Australia

The parliamentary elections on 7 September were clearly won by the conservative opposition formed by “Liberals” and “Nationals”. On 16 September, the Abbot I government was presented and announced the abolishment of the CO2 tax, the consolidation of the budget, measures against illegal boat arrivals and the strengthening of the Australian economy.

At foreign policy level, the country’s UNSC membership for the period 2013–2014 and its assumption of the G20 Presidency in December marked two very important highlights.
3.5.2. New Zealand

The governing coalition led by Prime Minister John Key was faced with numerous challenges including in connection with the sale of the public hydro power plants which were objected to by both the Maori and a number of economic experts. The opposition Labour Party continued to focus on its consolidation.

3.5.3. Oceania

The 44th Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), dealing with the topic of climate change, was held on the Marshall Islands at the beginning of September. The meeting was, however, overshadowed by protocol-related disputes between China and Taiwan, as the Marshall Islands maintain diplomatic relations with Taiwan but not, however, with the People's Republic of China.

Following controversial discussions and protests, regulations for the implementation of the death penalty were introduced in Papua New Guinea against the background of numerous lynch murders of “witches”. The efforts towards assisting the Fijis in their return to democracy and the rule of law were continued. After a draft constitution prepared by a mixed Fijian-international commission had been rejected, the government – with a view to the elections scheduled for 2014 – introduced a constitution it had prepared itself. The Australia-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) launched by the PIF was converted into a purely civilian mission with development components. The projects launched in several Pacific states under the Italian-Austrian programme towards promoting the use of renewable energy projects were successfully continued.
4. Security Policy Dimension

4.1. Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

The Common European Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) is an integral element of the CFSP (see Chapter 2.3.2.1.). Until the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009 the term European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was used in place of the term CSDP.

Both civilian crisis management missions and military crisis management operations are conducted under the CSDP. In 2013, a total of 12 civilian missions and 4 military operations to which some 7,000 individuals from the police and customs authorities, the judiciary, from the fields of human rights and gender, the diplomacy and the military contributed, were conducted on three continents. While civilian missions are funded from the EU budget, the costs of military operations are borne by the respective Member States.

In the context of CSDP the EU Member States also work on:

- further developing the civilian and military capabilities necessary for implementing missions/operations,
- common training of seconded staff, for instance in the context of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), and
- further developing concepts that enable faster and more efficient crisis response while guaranteeing staff safety and security.

Furthermore, the Treaty of Lisbon provides for a deepening of the CSDP by introducing a mutual assistance clause among EU Member States, a broadening of the so-called Petersberg tasks, the improvement of cooperation within the European Defence Agency, the possibility of setting up Permanent Structured Cooperation in the military field, and the strengthening of the role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and – while not regulated in the CFSP framework, yet being closely connected – the introduction of a solidarity clause among EU Member States. Concrete steps towards the implementation of Permanent Structured Cooperation have not been taken thus far.

In preparation for the European Council of December and against the background of the ongoing crisis in public finances, low public interest in security issues and differences of opinion among Member States on the level of ambition for and further development of the CSDP, a comprehensive discussion on both objectives and funding of the CSDP was held at several levels in 2013. Deliberations focused on the thematic fields of enhancing the effectiveness and impact of CSDP, intensifying capabilities development, and strengthening the European defence and security industry.

Relevant contributions to the discussion were inter alia the EC Communication on the European Defence and Security Industry of 24 July, the report by the High Representative on the CSDP of 15 October, the Council Conclu-
Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

On 25 November following the joint discussion held by the EU foreign and defence ministers and the joint communication by the EC and the High Representative on the EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises of 11 December.

Austria contributed to the discussion by submitting two working papers, one on CSDP reform in general and the other on enhancing civilian CSDP (the latter together with Finland, Greece, Ireland and Slovenia).

In the Conclusions adopted by the European Council in December 2013, the above Council Conclusions on CSDP were also endorsed. Together they form a package of comprehensive tasks aimed at increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of CSDP.

The concrete results include, alongside fundamental work towards revising the European Security Strategy from 2003, steps aimed at developing a political framework to support defence planning; towards improving civilian CSDP missions (faster, more flexible) and further developing civilian capabilities; elaborating an EU framework for a cyber-defence policy and a maritime security strategy as well as action plans for their implementation; as well as specification and definition of timelines for key projects in the defence sector (air-to-air refuelling capacity, remotely piloted aircraft systems, “Cyber Defence”), towards the development of defence industry standards and a comprehensive EU-wide supply security regime as well as measures towards promoting small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) that are active in the defence industry.

Particular importance is attached to the concept of high utility force packages that are available at short notice and can be rapidly tailored to fulfil specific missions (“Battlegroups”). Based on a semi-annual rotation system, two such groups that include approximately 1,500 personnel are available and, if necessary, capable of being deployed within 5 to 15 days. The EU is currently working on enhancing the Battlegroups’ operational capability.

The effectiveness of the CSDP missions and operations largely depends on their incorporation in the overall EU strategies for the respective country and/or region. Such strategies need to be based on a jointly prepared survey of the situation and/or a common conflict analysis. In the context of a pilot project, the European External Action Service (EEAS) thus prepared a concise conflict analysis on the Sahel region, which inter alia takes account of the further development of the CSDP missions and operations in this region (EUTM Mali, EUCAP Sahel Niger). Activities were continued in the fields of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and mediation. Austria welcomed and actively supported the priorities thus set by the EEAS.

Another aspect that plays a key role in promoting the effectiveness of CSDP is joint training of personnel engaged in the context of civilian and military CSDP. This holds true both at strategic level, i.e. with regard to civilian and military decision-makers in the EU Member States and at EU level – and also
at operational level, i.e. personnel deployed in the individual missions and operations.

With a view to improving training in the strategic field, the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), an EU-wide network composed of Member States’ civilian and military training institutions, was put on a new legal basis thus also strengthening its human and financial resources. Around one third of all ESDC courses are provided by Austrian facilities (Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports – National Defence Academy, Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution, FMEIA, Federal Ministry of the Interior – Security Academy).

At the operational level, the starting situation varies greatly depending on the type of crisis management (military, police and other civilian crisis management). While training and operational preparation of soldiers and police officers is regulated and funded by the state in all Member States, there are only few state-operated and/or state-funded training institutions for the other civilian areas. For this reason all relevant civilian training providers joined forces and formed the “European Group on Training for Civilian Crisis Management”. Under this heading, they organise courses that are funded by the EC in the context of projects such as “Europe’s New Training Initiative in Civilian Crisis Management” (ENTRi), which is currently ongoing. Austria contributes to this initiative through the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution. Work towards developing a sustainable solution for meeting the increasing need for appropriate training in the field of civilian CSDP is still underway.

In terms of practical crisis management activities in the operational area, the EU increasingly has to take account of the fact that there are often a large number of international organisations dealing with the various aspects of a crisis in the operational settings. This requires enhanced cooperation and sharing of labour on the ground, especially with the UN, NATO, (see Chapter 4.3.), OSCE and African Union (AU).

EU-UN cooperation on crisis management is advanced in regular meetings at officials’ levels. The two organisations coordinate their approaches in the fields of conflict prevention, mediation, peacekeeping and peace building. Where CSDP and UN missions have been conducted in the same region (in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, Kosovo or Somalia, for instance), experience has shown that efficient and well-functioning cooperation between the EU and the UN plays a key role in maintaining international peace and security. The EU also fully supports the “New Horizon” initiative towards reforming UN peacekeeping operations, launched by the UN Secretariat in 2009.

Out of the 28 EU Member States, 22 also hold NATO membership. Hence cooperation between both organisations is correspondingly close. In line with the “Berlin Plus Agreement”, the CSDP operation EUFOR Althea in
Bosnia and Herzegovina is thus carried out by accessing and using NATO capabilities and facilities. EU and NATO are also jointly engaged in crisis management operations in Afghanistan and in Kosovo – the EU with civilian missions, while NATO in both cases assumes military tasks. In the seas around the Horn of Africa there is close coordination between the EU operation EU NAVFOR Atalanta and the NATO operation Ocean Shield aimed at fighting piracy off the coast of Somalia. When building up military capabilities, the EU also works in coordination with NATO. In this context, it is assured that the requirements to be fulfilled by the Member States’ armed forces in the framework of EU and NATO are compatible with and/or complement each other. Cooperation in the field of cyber security has also become increasingly important.

Cooperation between the EU and the OSCE is especially close in the Western Balkans and in the states of the European Neighbourhood policy, where both organisations are actively contributing towards building up and strengthening democratic and rule of law institutions.

Since December 2007, security policy cooperation between the EU and the AU has been based on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Adopted at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon, the Strategy and the Peace and Security Partnership enshrined in it, have been implemented since 2008.

4.1.1. CSDP Operations and Missions

The following missions/operations were conducted under CSDP in the reporting year:

Civilian CSDP missions:
- EUAVSEC Juba (South Sudan)
- EUBAM Rafah (Palestinian territories)
- EUBAM Libya
- EUCAP Nestor (Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia and Tanzania)
- EUCAP Sahel Niger
- EUJUST LEX Iraq
- EULEX Kosovo (with Austrian involvement)
- EUMM Georgia (with Austrian involvement)
- EUPOL Afghanistan (with Austrian involvement)
- EUPOL COPPS (Palestinian territories; with Austrian involvement)
- EUPOL RD Congo
- EUSEC RD Congo (with Austrian involvement)

Military CSDP operations:
- EUFOR Althea (Bosnia and Herzegovina; with Austrian involvement)
4.2. OSCE

4.2.1. The OSCE’s Evolution towards a comprehensive Security Community

At its meeting in Dublin in December 2012, the OSCE Ministerial Council agreed to formally launch the Helsinki+40 Process. Under this process, the three consecutive Chairmanships, Ukraine 2013, Switzerland 2014 and Serbia 2015, were mandated with developing concrete proposals for the establishment of a comprehensive security community. Commonalities and shared views are being explored with a view to modernising the organisation and making real progress towards the building of a comprehensive security community in the entire OSCE area by the year 2015 – which marks the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act. The beginning of the process was marked by a declaration adopted at the Kiev Ministerial Council (5 and 6 December) under the Ukrainian Chairmanship. The declaration reconfirms the OSCE participating States’ strong commitment to further developing the process and stresses the importance of inclusiveness with regard to the OSCE executive structures, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the Forum for Security Co-operation, partner states, academia and civil society.

In the light of the decision by the Ukrainian government not to sign the free trade agreement negotiated with the EU, the OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in Kiev was already marked by major anti-government protests on the city’s Maidan Square. The still unresolved conflicts in the OSCE area (Nagorno-Karabakh, Transnistria, Georgia) as well as differing assessments regarding the importance and further development of the human dimension within the OSCE hindered the achievement of any substantial progress. An application to become OSCE Partner for Co-operation submitted by Libya could not be fully dealt with.

4.2.2. Regional Issues and Field Activities

The OSCE maintains 16 field operations in South East Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), to which a significant share of the OSCE budget (60 %) and human resources are allocated. Austria seconded
16 civilian experts to over half of these field operations, the vast majority of whom were active in South East Europe.

With regard to project funding, Austria focused on those countries in most urgent need of assistance in consolidating democratic structures, human rights and the rule of law, such as the Southern Mediterranean region. In the fields of border management, national minorities, removal of unexploded ordnance and landmines, Austria contributed to projects in the Central Asian region that were directly related to the stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan. Likewise, contributions were made to projects in the fields of women’s rights, freedom and security as well as the fight against human trafficking and the preparation of standards on freedom of assembly.

4.2.2.1. South East Europe

While improvements in the overall situation in South East Europe were taken account of in terms of budgeting, the OSCE continues to maintain its major field operations in South East Europe, i.e. in Kosovo and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, OSCE field presences are being maintained in Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The OSCE’s field operations represent an important contribution towards strengthening rule of law and democratic structures and consolidating multi-ethnic societies in South East Europe, thus making a substantial contribution towards these countries’ rapprochement to the EU. The OSCE seeks to increasingly shift its activities from stand-alone OSCE programmes towards monitoring and counselling of local administrative and political structures. The focus was inter alia on elections, human rights and minorities, freedom of the media, democratic structures and control mechanisms governed by the rule of law (at national and local level), an active civil society, fighting corruption, judicial systems and law enforcement. The related activities encompass the entire spectrum from the preparation of the relevant legislation to the implementation and application of such legal provisions. In this context, a key focus is placed on an integrated regional approach to be able to address many issues and problems (such as human trafficking, organised crime, drug trafficking, etc.) more effectively. The OSCE’s offices’ presence and their monitoring and reporting activities make a valuable contribution towards furthering democratic development in the South East European states.

The OSCE and the OSCE Mission in Kosovo won international recognition for facilitating the Kosovar local elections in the North of Kosovo in November and December. Thanks to the substantial support provided by the OSCE, it was possible for the very first time to hold Kosovar elections throughout the entire national territory.

For further information on Kosovo please also see Chapter 3.1.1.3.3.
Security Policy Dimension

4.2.2.2. Moldova/Transnistria
See Chapter 3.1.5.2.

4.2.2.3. Belarus
See Chapter 3.1.5.3.

4.2.2.4. Ukraine
See Chapter 3.1.5.1.

4.2.2.5. Southern Caucasus
The OSCE’s activities in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan related mainly to confidence-building measures aimed at resolving the protracted regional conflicts. In the context of the Minsk Process led by France, Russia and the USA, the OSCE strives to mitigate the impacts of the conflict involving Nagorno-Karabakh and to contribute towards reaching a long-term solution. To this end, a meeting between the Presidents of State of Armenia and Azerbaijan was held in Vienna in November. Although it failed to produce immediate progress, the encounter encouraged hopes for an improved working atmosphere for the next few years.

The OSCE Offices in Azerbaijan and in Armenia support both states in implementing their commitments in the fields of democratisation, rule of law, good governance and enhancement of civil society initiatives.

The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) dispatched an election observation mission to Armenia in February and to Azerbaijan in October. Particularly with regard to Azerbaijan, ODIHR issued critical statements referring to restrictions in fundamental freedoms and significant problems throughout the entire election process.

In Georgia, ODIHR observed the presidential elections in October, which it described as “efficiently administered and transparent” taking place in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

Together with the EU, Austria supported the OSCE’s efforts towards defusing and/or settling the conflict involving South Ossetia and Abkhazia in the context of the Geneva talks. The two separatist provinces are recognised as independent states by Russia which rejects the establishment of an OSCE mission in the region. The OSCE called upon the parties to the conflict not to restrict free movement of civilians by establishing new internal borders and supports confidence-building measures in the field of water supply.

For further information please also see Chapter 3.1.6.
4.2.2.6. Central Asia

The OSCE stepped up its commitment in the Central Asian states, thus confirming its role as one of the most important players in the region. Apart from the tasks assumed by the OSCE with respect to traditional security issues at politico-military level – like early warning, conflict prevention, confidence and security building measures, mediation and fighting terrorism – the OSCE field presences placed a continued and increased focus of project activities on the human dimension. The withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan in 2014 marks a key event for the region, especially in terms of security and stability. In this context, the OSCE field presences with their border management projects play a key role. The OSCE Border Management Staff College (BMSC) in Tajikistan, which is co-funded by Austria, facilitates high-quality training for border officials and staff.

The OSCE Centre in Kazakhstan focused its efforts on fighting international terrorism, promoting border management and the control of small arms and light weapons. Other priorities pursued included strengthening civil society, good governance as well as supporting Kazakhstan in fighting human trafficking and promoting equality among women and men.

The OSCE Centre in Kyrgyzstan focused on issues such as political consolidation, transparency of election processes, rule of law, conflict prevention – especially in the field of ethnic tensions, border management, fighting terrorism, sustainable use of natural resources and distribution of land – especially through improved local self-administration. The Centre furthermore supports activities towards promoting equality among women and men and fighting human trafficking. The OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which is co-funded by Austria, serves as both a training centre and a platform for dialogue in the region. The establishment of a Research Centre on Afghan-Central Asian Relations, embedded in the Academy, is being considered for 2014. The confidence and security building measures launched by the Community Security Initiative (CSI), established in 2010, contributed significantly towards improving cooperation between police authorities and local citizens.

As the OSCE is playing an increasingly prominent role in capacity-building, the OSCE Office in Tajikistan has assumed an increasing number of tasks, especially with respect to developing effective border management. The OSCE Office also houses the BMSC. By training border police officers from the region and especially from Afghanistan, the BMSC strives to contribute to ensuring secure and stable borders with a view to the withdrawal of NATO troops in 2014.

The OSCE Centre in Turkmenistan and the Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan mainly implement projects in the politico-military dimension, especially in the field of border management. At the parliamentary elections in Turkmenistan, ODIHR was for the first time invited to observe the elections. In its report on the election process, ODIHR addressed the need for compre-
hensive improvements, especially in terms of fundamental rights and pluralism.

4.2.3. Election Observation

The OSCE election observation missions are conducted by delegates from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) and staff from the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). One of the main tasks of the Warsaw-based ODIHR is to promote democratic election processes, on the one hand by providing technical support in preparing and implementing election law provisions, and on the other hand in conducting election observation missions. ODIHR organised election observation missions for elections at national level in nine participating States (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Macedonia, Mongolia, Montenegro and Tajikistan). ODIHR also seconded three experts to Austria to observe the parliamentary elections to the National Council on 29 September.

Austria participated in ODIHR election observation missions by seconding a total of 18 observers (16 short-term observers and two long-term observers) for elections held in Armenia, Albania, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Mongolia and Tajikistan.

4.2.4. The OSCE’s Human Dimension

The human dimension is the core element of the OSCE’s activities aimed at protecting and promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Its operational institution is the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the Vienna-based OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

ODIHR assumes an internationally recognised position especially in the field of election observation (see Chapter 4.2.3). The ODIHR’s scope covers the promotion and observation of democratic elections, the building-up of democratic structures and the promotion of human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination and the rule of law. Other areas of work relate to the rights of Roma and Sinti as well as to broad-based activities in the fields of freedom of assembly and association, support for civil society, process monitoring, gender mainstreaming and cooperation with the OSCE’s external partners.

Another central task fulfilled by ODIHR consists in monitoring the implementation of commitments under the entire human dimension and especially the organisation of regular implementation meetings. The 17th Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (HDIM) was held in Warsaw from 23 September to 4 October. Traditionally, the HDIM has been the most important forum for exchange between NGOs and OSCE participating States. With 1,134 participants, including 432 representatives from NGOs, attendance
was again impressive. The individual modules dealt with topics that are also priorities of Austria’s human rights policy: freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, fighting human trafficking, racism/discrimination – especially against Christians and Muslims; preventing violence against women and girls and involvement of women in decision-making processes; freedom of expression and freedom of the media, including the safety and security of journalists, minority issues, human rights education, democracy at all levels of administration, civic and political rights, democratic elections and election monitoring, rule of law, humanitarian issues (including Roma and Sinti) as well as the activities of ODIHR, the OSCE Secretariat and field presences under the human dimension. As was the case in previous years, the HDIM specified the direction developments within the OSCE’s human dimension are to take.

The three annual Supplementary Human Dimension Meetings (SHDM) held in Vienna were dedicated to the following topics: “Freedom of Movement and Human Contacts” on 25 and 26 April, “The Rule of Law in the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights” on 11 and 12 July and – on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the OSCE Action Plan in 2003 – “Implementation of the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti” on 7 and 8 November. Under the heading of “Media Freedom Legal Framework”, a special seminar was held in Warsaw from 13 to 15 May.

The OSCE’s activities in the field of tolerance were further implemented by the three Personal Representatives of the Chairperson-in-Office: Rabbi Andrew Baker (USA, Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism), Adil Akhmetov (Kazakhstan, Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims) and Tetiana Izhevska (Ukraine) who had been newly appointed by the Ukrainian Chair as Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination including Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions. Maria Grazia Giammarinaro (Italy) continued as Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, June Zeitlin continued as Special Representative of the Chairperson-in-Office on Gender Issues

On 20 August, former Finnish Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors succeeded Knut Vollebaek (Norway) in the function as High Commissioner on National Minorities. The High Commissioner is responsible for identifying and seeking early resolution of ethnic tensions that might endanger peace, stability or friendly relations between the participating States of the OSCE. Dunja Mijatović (Bosnia and Herzegovina), whose mandate was extended on 7 March for another three years, has held the office of OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media since 2010. In her function, she is responsible for observing relevant media developments in the OSCE participating States with a view to providing early identification of violations of freedom of expression and to assisting participating States by
advocating and promoting full compliance with OSCE principles and commitments regarding freedom of expression and freedom of the media. In this context, the Representative on Freedom of the Media increasingly focuses on promoting freedom of opinion in digital media such as the internet.

At the OSCE Ministerial Council in Kiev in December, participants for the first time in years succeeded in adopting special decisions relating to the human dimension: The Decision on Enhancing OSCE Efforts to Implement the Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sinti within the OSCE Area, places a particular focus on Roma and Sinti women, youth and children. This Ministerial Council decision was adopted in the light of the 10th anniversary of the OSCE Action Plan on Improving the Situation of Roma and Sintí in the OSCE Area. The Action Plan contains recommendations towards promoting the greater social integration of Roma and Sinti and deals with economic aspects, access to healthcare and participation in public and political life. The second decision adopted by the Ministerial Council contains provisions on freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, calls upon participating States to implement their commitments and obligations in these areas and reconfirms the right to non-discrimination of religious or belief communities.

4.2.5. The OSCE’s Security Policy Dimension

Austria supports the efforts towards the ongoing implementation of the “Vienna Document 2011” on confidence and security-building measures, the Code of Conduct on the Politico-Military Aspects of Security, and the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, and supported a substantial further development and updating of the Vienna Document. Together with other participating States, Austria supported a reduction of threshold values for the notification of certain military activities and the possibility of forming multinational teams for verification measures. In the context of the Update of the OSCE Principles governing Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Austria advocated strengthening non-proliferation and also submitted concrete proposals towards this end.

Austria supported the Ukrainian OSCE Chairmanship in initiating a strategic Security Dialogue on conventional arms control in Europe. Representatives from the FMEIÀ, the Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sports and the Austrian Institute for International Affairs provided important contributions to discussions held in the context of Security Dialogues, seminars organised by the OSCE Secretary General and the annual review conference. In these formats, Austria stressed the need for conventional arms control in the OSCE context and called for the continuation of the respective strategic discussion.

Austria provided financial support to OSCE projects on small arms and light weapons and on the stockpiling of conventional ammunition (Central Asian
republics and Afghanistan). Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of National Defence and Sports started training experts on the safe stockpiling of arms and ammunition in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Moldova.

The Ministerial Council in Kiev adopted the Decision on Small Arms and Light Weapons and Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition as well as the Declaration on the Update of the OSCE Principles governing Non-Proliferation. It is also the first time that a voluntary exchange of information on the impact of illicit arms on women and children as well as women’s contribution to security was included in such a document. Along with the review of and, if necessary, adaptation of older documents, it is most of all the inclusion of gender aspects in the work on small arms and light weapons that marks progress in this connection. A resolution by the Forum for Security Co-operation, which meets in Vienna throughout the year, on the update of the Principles governing Non-Proliferation was welcomed by the Ministerial Council.

The Ministerial Council also strongly welcomed the decision on confidence building measures in the field of cyber security. By promoting transparency and trust between OSCE participating States and through networking among national experts, special emphasis is placed on safeguarding freedom of the internet, freedom of expression and the protection of privacy. This is also in keeping with the Austrian Strategy for Cyber Security.

### 4.2.6. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension

The OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension was dominated by the topic of strengthening stability and security in Europe by preventing adverse environmental impacts of energy-related activities. These efforts were proactively supported by the Slovakian chairman of the working group.

The three meetings of national experts in Vienna (February), in Kiev (April) and Prague (September) prepared two Ministerial Council decisions in December. The first decision focuses on identifying the cross-border consequences of production, transport and consumption of energy and encouraging energy-saving measures, the use of renewable energy and other innovative approaches. The second decision aims at protecting energy networks against natural and man-made disasters and promoting cooperation among participating States in order to avoid disasters or mitigate their consequences.

### 4.2.7. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (PA) with its headquarters in Copenhagen, and since 2002 with a liaison office in Vienna, is made up of 320 parliamentarians from the 56 participating States. The 21st Annual Session was held in Istanbul from 29 June to 3 July and focused in particular on the
"Helsinki+40" process. Draft resolutions were prepared by the three committees and dealt with security challenges, economic and financial issues, fundamental freedoms and the fulfilment of OSCE commitments. Further draft resolutions dealt inter alia with the situation in Belarus, in Syria, cyber security and water management. As was the case in 2012, the PA again focused on the Arab Spring and deliberated on involving the Palestinian Authority in the group of Mediterranean Partners of the OSCE. Riccardo Migliori (Italy) held the position of President of the PA until the middle of the year. At the Annual Session in Istanbul Ranko Krivokapic (Montenegro) was elected as the new President. The 12th Winter Meeting, which has convened annually in Vienna since 2002, took place on 21 and 22 February. Sessions were held by the General Committee on Democracy, Human Rights and Humanitarian Questions and the committees on Political Affairs and Security, Economic Affairs, Science, Technology and the Environment.

A special debate was held on the situation in Syria, Sahel and North Africa.

A long-standing conflict with ODIHR on OSCE election observations had reached an absolute low at the Dublin Ministerial Council 2012, when the President of the PA Riccardo Migliori (PdL) on 6 December rescinded the Cooperation Agreement. This, however, presented the risk of inconsistent evaluations by the PA and ODIHR during OSCE election observations. François-Xavier De Donnea (Belgium) was commissioned with preparing a study towards settling the dispute, which was to serve as the basis for further steps. The Member of the Austrian National Council and at the time temporarily Acting President of the PA, Wolfgang Großruck, supported the intensive mediation efforts. In April, the PA eventually reactivated the Cooperation Agreement and joint election observation missions were resumed.

4.3. North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

4.3.1. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP)

Austria has been a member of PfP since 1995 and a member of the EAPC, the forum of cooperation between NATO and its partner countries in the field of security policy, since 1997.

With up to 400 soldiers, Austria provided the largest contingent of any partner country under the NATO-led peace mission in Kosovo (KFOR) in 2013 and was thus overall the fourth-largest KFOR troop provider. Austria also seconded three staff officers to the headquarters of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan (see also Chapters 3.1.1.3.3. Kosovo and 3.4.2.3. Afghanistan).

On 28 March, talks between senior officials from the International Staff of NATO and Austria were held in Vienna. The NATO delegation was headed
by Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Dirk Brengelmann. Discussions focused on general NATO developments, partnerships, NATO-led operations and bilateral issues.

With a view to establishing the matter of protection of civilians in armed conflict more strongly in the NATO/EAPC context, Austria together with Norway assumed leadership of a “Tiger Team” at the beginning of the year. Based on the initiative of this informal group, which in the meantime consists of 10 partner and allied countries, an EAPC meeting on awareness-raising with respect to the protection of civilians was held in Brussels on 4 July. Involving representatives from the UN and the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung, ÖSFK) in Stadtschlaining, it was possible to establish the basis for ongoing consideration of this topic in the NATO/EAPC context; the “Tiger Team” subsequently prepared the relevant catalogue of measures in order to make progress in the areas of training, doctrine development and cooperation with international organisations in the NATO/EAPC context. This catalogue of measures is already being implemented.

As in the past, Austria again contributed pro-actively to implementing UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security in the EAPC framework and in the context of NATO-led operations. Austria provided financial support for the review carried out in this connection by the “Nordic Centre for Gender”.

Together with the Western European partner countries Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Malta and Ireland, Austria contributed pro-actively to the debate on the future design and further development of NATO Partnerships.

Austria also assumed an active role in the political deliberations dealing with the developments in the Western Balkans, the Middle East and new threats posed to security.
5. Austria in other European Fora

5.1. Council of Europe

5.1.1. The Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers 2013/2014

On 14 November, Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger took over the rotating Chair in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (CoE), which is held by Austria until May 2014. Austria last held Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers in 1993.

Over these six months, Austria is pursuing a broad-based and diverse programme with numerous thematic priorities that are highlighted by related events and conferences organised both in Austria and in Strasbourg. Alongside the CoE’s three thematic pillars – human rights, democracy and rule of law – Austria defined the fight against human trafficking, the protection of freedom of expression, safety of journalists, internet governance and combating violence against women including domestic violence as priorities for its work.

The following meetings have already been held under the Austrian Chairmanship:

On the initiative of the Austrian Federal Chancellery, a specialised meeting of legal experts was held in Vienna on 15 November under the heading of “Working together for Europe. Interrelations between the Council of Europe, the European Union and Member States”.

From 21 to 23 November, the “Annual Consultative Forum” of the CoE’s Cultural Routes Programme met in the Hofburg in Innsbruck. Bringing together about 150 high-level participants from numerous European countries, the forum focused on the programme’s future orientation.

On 3 and 4 December, the Federal Ministry of the Interior organised an experts’ conference in Graz that dealt with “Integration Policy on a regional and local level – Best practice examples from Europe”.

On 12 December, the Ministers’ Deputies Committee (MDC) in the CoE convened for a thematic debate on the topic of “Safety of journalists – Further steps for the better implementation of human rights standards”. At this meeting, representatives of CoE member States, of the CoE’s organs and civil society deliberated inter alia on the commitment to take positive measures for the protection of journalists.

The 124th Session of the Committee of Ministers to be held on 6 May 2014 in Vienna will mark both the highlight and conclusion of the Austrian Chairmanship. At this meeting, the first-ever report on the situation of human rights, the rule of law and democracy in Europe, prepared by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland, will be presented.
5.1.2. Most important Political Developments

The continuation of the reform process of the CoE, including the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), remained a focus of activities during the reporting year (see Chapter 8.4.). In its 123rd Session held on 16 May, the Committee of Ministers underlined the need for ensuring the high level of protection under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in the long term and instructed the MDC to consider this a priority.

As a result of the reform of the CoE, initiated by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland in 2010, a number of important institutional improvements have been achieved over the last few years, including streamlining and reform of intergovernmental structures. In 2013, the focus was placed on reform of the CoE's monitoring mechanisms. This reform envisages on the one hand better coordination of the various mechanisms of the CoE (see Chapter 5.1.4.) and on the other hand more efficient use of the monitoring results as well as transition to customised assistance programmes.

In its 123rd Session, the Committee of Ministers invited the Secretary General to regularly present a situation report on democracy, human rights and rule of law in Europe founded on the conclusions of the monitoring mechanisms. The first such report is to be discussed at the 124th Session of the Committee of Ministers in Vienna in May 2014.

In this 123rd Session the Committee of Ministers also called for a consolidation of the enhanced cooperation between the CoE and non-member States in the Mediterranean region and in Central Asia, established in 2011 in the context of CoE policy towards neighbouring regions. To date Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Israel, the PLO, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan have engaged in a Neighbourhood Cooperation Dialogue with the CoE. Cooperation priorities that are co-funded by the EU have been agreed on and adopted with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

The Agreement on Accession of the EU to the ECHR was completed on 5 April. It is currently being examined by the European Court of Justice for compatibility with Union law (see Chapter 8.4.). In the reporting year, the EU increasingly drew on the CoE’s expert knowledge in the context of the former’s Eastern Partnership.

The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) was closely involved in the dialogue between the EU and the Ukraine on judicial reform and especially on constitutional and electoral law reform in the Ukraine. On 13 February, the USA’s official request for membership of the Venice Commission was accepted by the MDC thus making the USA the 59th member.

On 11 June, the MDC adopted a declaration on risks to fundamental rights stemming from the global use of digital tracking and other surveillance technologies. Against the background of the tense situation in the Ukraine, the MDC on 18 December (already under Austrian Chairmanship) called upon all political camps to engage in peaceful dialogue. In the course of the report-
ing year, the MDC furthermore adopted five other declarations in which it condemned the death penalty as well as executions that had been carried out in Japan and in the USA.

In the course of the year, the MDC held four thematic debates on the following topics: “Ways to improve the impact of the Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms” on 15 March; “The role of human rights defenders and the Council of Europe’s interaction with civil society” on 12 June; “The role of the Council of Europe in addressing the rise of extremisms in evolving societies” on 18 September; “Safety of journalists – Further steps for the better implementation of human rights standards” on 12 December under Austrian Chairmanship (see Chapter 5.1.1.).

On 15 and 16 April, the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture met in Moscow and discussed the topic of “Governance of Culture – Promoting Access to Culture”. The 24th meeting of Ministers of Education was held on 26 and 27 April in Helsinki focusing on “Governance and Quality Education”. On 7 and 8 November, the first specialised ministers’ conference of the Council of Europe’s Ministers for Media and New Communication Services convened in Belgrade under the heading of “Freedom of Expression and Democracy in the Digital Age – Opportunities, Rights, Responsibilities”. The items dealt with in particular included issues related to free internet access and protection of journalists.

In the context of the 123rd Session of the Committee of Ministers, Andorra, which had placed the focus on educational issues, particularly with a view to human rights, competences for living together peacefully, and democratic development, handed over the Chairmanship to Armenia. The Armenian Chairmanship had made the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance a priority of its work. The high-level conference in Yerevan on 21 and 22 October was also dedicated to these topics. At this meeting, the role played by human rights institutions in combating ethnic discrimination, hate speeches and racial stereotypes was addressed.

Under the Austrian Chairmanship, the MDC in November adopted a two-year-budget for the biennium 2014–15. This budget provides for an annual budget volume of 244 million euros. In the light of the factual budgetary constraints they are faced with, member States have also in the CoE context increasingly pushed for streamlining structures, enhanced cost control (global zero-growth principle, reduction of the personnel costs’ share) and increased flexibility in the headcount structure.

5.1.3. Relations with other International Organisations

Relations between the CoE and the EU continue to be governed by the Memorandum of Understanding, signed in 2007, which defines the formal framework for close cooperation in areas of shared interest – such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, culture, education and social cohesion – and
Council of Europe

confirms the role played by the CoE as a point of reference for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. On 18 November, the EU Foreign Affairs Council furthermore adopted a strategic document on EU priorities for cooperation with the CoE in 2014–2015. The three priority areas of cooperation outlined in the document centre on political cooperation (more regular and frequent working meetings), and legal cooperation (strengthening coherence between EU law and CoE legal standards) as well as assistance cooperation through joint projects in EU partner countries.

At operational level, cooperation was further intensified, especially with respect to common projects. Programmes for South East and East European countries that are jointly prepared and co-funded by the EU and the CoE and provide for a more substantial promotion of human rights, the rule of law and democracy, are the main priority of cooperation and make up an important share of the CoE’s programme-related activities. The EU is thus by far the largest voluntary donor with regard to CoE projects.

At political level, there is a regular exchange between the Secretary General of the CoE and members of the European Commission. Other high-level meetings that are supplemented by the regular exchange of information between the Secretariat of the Council of Europe and the EC at officials’ level took place as well. There is successful cooperation in place with the Vienna-based EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), in the context of which both institutions inform each other in advance on planned activities and act in close coordination. Under the EU’s Eastern Partnership, the CoE participates in two of the four Eastern Partnership Policy Platforms (“democracy, rule of law and stability” as well as “contacts between people”). The CoE maintains a permanent Office in Brussels; the EU, which is represented by a delegation in Strasbourg, participates in CoE sessions.

Cooperation between the CoE and the OSCE is well-established and was continued in the context of Co-ordination Group meetings held in March and in October. The meetings focused each time on two of the four central topics – promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination, protection of national minorities, fighting terrorism, and combating trafficking in human beings. The two organisations’ secretariats coordinate the respective activities to the largest extent possible. In October, the Secretary General of the CoE Thorbjørn Jagland and the Secretary General of the OSCE Lamberto Zannier each paid visits to the other organisation and held an exchange of views with the MDC in Strasbourg and the Permanent Council in Vienna. The CoE furthermore maintains liaison offices at the OSCE and other international organisations in Vienna, at the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in Warsaw and at the Geneva-based international organisations.

5.1.4. Human Rights

See Chapter 8.4.
5.1.5. Monitoring Respect of Commitments by Member States

One of the CoE’s most important tools is monitoring member States’ compliance with the commitments undertaken in the fields of human rights, pluralist democracy and freedom of expression and information. These commitments entered into effect by the member States’ accession to the CoE or to specific conventions of the CoE.

The PA’s Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the CoE is responsible for monitoring compliance with commitments member States undertook upon accession to the CoE until their full implementation. The Monitoring Committee currently deals with ten states: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine. A post-monitoring dialogue on strengthening the respective country’s democratic institutions is being conducted with Bulgaria, Monaco, Macedonia and Turkey. Every two years the Committee also prepares country reports as well as recommendations that are adopted by the plenary of the PA.

Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers is based either on obligations arising from the accession procedures (as in the cases of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) or on obligations arising from specific difficulties faced by the respective member State following accession (as in the cases of Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). The Committee of Ministers also conducts thematic monitoring. All monitoring processes are confidential and flexible processes carried out over an extended period of time.

Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers of the national implementation of the judgements passed by the ECtHR is based on Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocol No. 11 and takes place in four annual meetings that extend over several days. The monitoring sessions regarding the ECtHR judgements are always chaired by the country that will hold the next Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers. The meetings held in June and September were chaired on behalf of Austria by the Legal Adviser of the FMEIA, Ambassador Helmut Tichy.

The Secretariat furthermore issues quarterly reports to the Committee of Ministers on Bosnia and Herzegovina, on Montenegro and on Serbia; and half-yearly reports on Georgia. In the framework of so-called “stock-taking”, Moldova is also subject to de facto monitoring. Furthermore, the CoE Offices in Baku, Belgrade, Yerevan, Chișinău, Pristina, Sarajevo, Tbilisi and Tirana report on developments in the respective states. The impact of the war that broke out in August 2008 between Georgia and Russia continues to feature on the agenda of the CoE, which strives to contribute in particular towards improving the human rights situation in the affected areas.

Thematic monitoring is undertaken with regard to a multitude of aspects and is related to commitments and obligations arising from member States’ accession to specific CoE Conventions. Thus the European Committee for the Pre-
Council of Europe

Convention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT), to which all member States of the Council of Europe are party, carries out periodic and ad hoc visits to national detention centres, prisons, police stations and psychiatric hospitals. The goal pursued by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) is prompting legislative reforms at national level through mutual evaluation and peer pressure to ensure that countries comply with the Council of Europe anti-corruption standards. Membership of GRECO, which is also open to non-member States of the Council of Europe, comprises 49 states (all CoE member States as well as Belarus and the USA). An experts’ committee (GRETA) monitors the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Austria was among the first countries to complete evaluation under the first monitoring cycle. The recommendations to Austria regarding measures taken based on the first GRETA report were answered by Austria on 26 September. The second evaluation round is to start in 2014. The advisory committee of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities evaluates the national implementation of obligations under the Convention. The 4th monitoring cycle on the implementation of the framework convention is currently ongoing. Austria has already been reviewed three times under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) focuses primarily on conducting country reviews and considers specific topics including cooperation with civil society. Regarding the three ECRI recommendations that are based on a visit to Austria in 2009, Austria submitted an interim report on the implementation status which was evaluated by ECRI in a final statement. The European Committee on Social Rights (ECSR) is tasked with judging whether state Parties are implementing the provisions of the European Social Charter in law and in practice. The second Austrian national report on the implementation of the revised European Social Charter on certain articles of the agreement by Austria was submitted to the CoE in November.

5.1.6. Assistance Programmes

Alongside its activities in the fields of standard-setting and monitoring, the CoE mainly assists the countries of South East Europe and the Caucasus as well as Russia in implementing the relevant objectives of the Council. The wide range of assistance programmes covers many areas from the promotion of human rights to the implementation of pluralist democracy and the rule of law, creation of awareness of a common cultural identity in all its diversity, the consolidation of democratic stability in Europe through to the fostering of political, legislative and constitutional law reform, as well as the search for solutions to problems facing European society such as discrimination of minorities, drugs and organised crime. In addition there are a number of “joint projects” – mainly EU funded and jointly implemented – which also focus on these countries and thematic priorities.
5.1.7. The Organs of the Council of Europe

5.1.7.1. The Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers is the supreme decision-making body of the Council of Europe. It is composed of the foreign ministers of the 47 member States and/or their permanent representatives (“Ministers’ Deputies”). The Committee’s chair rotates on a biannual basis and meetings at ministerial level generally take place once a year. The Ministers’ Deputies convene for sessions once a week. In these sessions they discuss specific issues and take decisions on topics prepared by the numerous thematic committees to which representatives from the relevant Austrian ministries and/or the representations in Strasbourg contribute on a pro-active basis.

5.1.7.2. The Parliamentary Assembly (PACE)

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is composed of 318 representatives and 318 deputies from national parliaments, who have amalgamated into five parliamentary groups: the Socialist Group (SOC), the Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Democrat Group (EDG), and the Group of the Unified European Left (UEL). There are 62 members who are not attached to any group. Austria is represented by six representatives and six deputies who are appointed by the National Council and the Federal Council. PACE meets four times a year for week-long plenary sessions and convenes periodically in committees. It issues resolutions, recommendations, opinions and guidelines to the Committee of Ministers, national governments, parliaments and political parties. PACE also carries out monitoring and election observation activities. Jean-Claude Mignon (EPP) from France is the President of the Parliamentary Assembly.

5.1.7.3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe (CLRAE)

The CLRAE was established in 1957 as the Conference of Local Authorities and constituted as the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe as the consultative body of the CoE. Its 318 members meet twice a year in Strasbourg. The Congress’ scope of responsibility involves formulating recommendations to the Committee of Ministers in the areas of urban and municipal democracy, environmental protection, disaster protection and social cohesion. These issues are followed up 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. The CLRAE monitors compliance with the commitments undertaken by its member States and promotes democracy at local and regional level where it also engages in election monitoring. The CLRAE has also developed projects which it offers
to South East Europe and the southern Mediterranean countries. These projects are geared towards developing and strengthening democracy at local and regional level. Since 2012, the President of the Tyrolean Diet (province parliament) Herwig van Staa has been President of the CLRAE, a position he also held from 2002 to 2004. The Austrian Andreas Kiefer is Secretary General of the CLRAE.

5.1.7.4. The Secretary General

The Secretary General is elected by the PACE 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. The Secretary General is also responsible for the CoE’s Secretariat and its some 2,100 employees. Since October 2009, the former Norwegian President of Parliament, Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland has held the office of Secretary General. For the next term in office, the following three candidates were nominated by their respective governments: Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway – re-election), Sabine Leutheusser-Schnarrenberger (Germany) and Jean-Claude Mignon (France).

5.1.8. The Council of Europe and Austria

Austria traditionally shows a high level of commitment in the CoE and has already been represented by three Secretaries General and two Presidents of the PACE. The office of President of the CLRAE has also been held twice by an Austrian. In total, about twenty Austrians are employed at the Council of Europe. Please see Chapter 5.1.1 for further information on the Austrian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers 2013/2014.

In the context of the CLRAE reform, Austria supports ensuring that the highest human rights standards be maintained, including the right of individual petition to the ECtHR. It also contributes pro-actively to human rights issues, particularly in relation to freedom of expression and freedom of the media. Austria furthermore places a special focus on issues related to internet governance and is also committed to monitoring South East European and Black Sea countries. The Representation of Austria to the CoE also provides interested Austrians with information concerning the objectives and tasks of the Council of Europe.

On 29 May, Austria signed a protocol amending the Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters and on 25 June Protocol No. 15 amending the ECHR (see Chapter 8.4.). The Criminal Law Convention on Corruption and the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence were ratified. The Additional Protocol to the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption was signed and ratified on 13 December.
5.2. Central European Initiative

Set up in 1989 by Austria, Italy, Hungary and the SFRY (Yugoslavia), the Trieste-based Central European Initiative (CEI) now consists of 18 Member States. With Croatia’s accession to the EU, the number of CEI members that also hold EU membership has risen to ten. The CEI is a political forum that strives to promote regional cooperation among the States of Central, East and South East Europe and seeks to assist non-EU members on their way towards EU integration. CEI projects, which receive funding from a range of sources including the EU, are important tools towards overcoming differences between states and play an important role as multipliers. The Know-how Exchange Programmes (KEP) are a very distinctive tool developed by the CEI. A special KEP that is funded by the ADC (Austrian Development Cooperation) was also set up. After its headquarters state Italy, Austria is the second largest contributor of funding to the CEI. The fact that the EU has entrusted the CEI with the implementation of – currently 13 – EU projects also reflects the trust the EU places in the CEI as a partner in this respect.

Alongside its project orientation, the organisation is increasingly developing into a bridge between the individual European (macro) regions. In this spirit, the Hungarian CEI Presidency placed a special focus on economic cooperation between CEI Member States. The new action plan 2014–2016 that covers priorities in the fields of “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” was also adopted in 2013. Both this new plan of priorities and the CEI’s newly developed “business dimension” were in essence prepared by the Austrian Margit Wästfelt, who has held the office of Alternate Secretary General since 1 January.

On 1 January 2014, Austria will take over the annually rotating Presidency from Hungary.

5.3. Alpine Convention

Together with the other Alpine countries Germany, France, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Switzerland and Slovenia as well as the EU, Austria has been a Party to the Convention on the Protection of the Alps (Alpine Convention) since 1991.

Based on the decision to develop a “macro-regional strategy for the Alpine region”, taken by the ministers at the 12th Conference of the Contracting Parties in September 2012, the process aimed at bundling the various activities was further promoted. The findings were then presented at a high-level international conference in Brussels on 17 December. The fact that the European Council in its Conclusions of 19/20 December invited the Commission to develop an EU Strategy for the Alpine Region by June 2015 will in future enable the Alpine Convention to play a special role.
The 4th contribution to a comprehensive Report on the Status of the Alps on the topic of “Sustainable Tourism in the Alps” was also presented.

On 1 July, the Austrian Markus Reiterer took office as Secretary General of the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention.

5.4. Danube Commission

Headquartered in Budapest, the Danube Commission (DC) is an international organisation made up of representatives of the Danube countries that aims to provide and develop free navigation on the Danube.

At its 80th Session on 6 June the DC elected a new Secretariat for a period of three years: Petar Margić from Croatia was elected new Director-General and the Austrian Horst Schindler new Chief Engineer.

The Commission continued its work on standardising the technical and nautical provisions. Close cooperation was also continued with the relevant bodies of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the EC and other river commissions on the regulation relating to the treatment of ship-borne waste and hazardous goods.

Under the EU Strategy for the Danube Region, the DC Secretariat continued to cooperate with the coordinator for the Priority Area 1a “To improve mobility and multimodality on inland waterways”. Work on an agreement on institutional cooperation between the DC and the EC (DG MOVE) was also started.

No progress was, however, made with respect to the enactment of the revised provisions of the Belgrade Convention.
6. The United Nations and its Specialised Agencies

6.1. Introduction

The massive deterioration of the situation in Syria, the outbreak of a grave crisis in the Central African Republic, the establishment of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) as well as the instable situation in South Sudan were the key issues faced by United Nations (UN). Attention was also focused on other problematic areas such as the impact of the “Arab Spring”, the still stagnating Middle East Peace Process as well as North Korean nuclear disarmament issues. Along with the numerous disturbing developments there were also some rays of hope. These more positive aspects included, for example, the agreement on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons, the adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) by the UN General Assembly (UNGA), crisis management that has been successful at least for the time being in Mali and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a certain rapprochement in the context of the E3+3 negotiations on the Iranian nuclear power programme as well as progress in developing the post-2015 development agenda.

A thematic focal point that also made up a major share of the UN’s work was the formulation of sustainable development goals to replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) due to expire in 2015.

Austria continued its long-standing efforts in the priority areas: protection of human rights, promotion of the rule of law, protection of civilians in armed conflict (including special protection of children and women) and disarmament issues.

The Austrian Permanent Representative to the UN Martin Sajdik held the position of Vice-President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

6.2. The General Assembly

6.2.1. Procedural Matters

The General Debate of the 68th UNGA on the theme “The Post-2015 Development Agenda: Setting the Stage” took place in New York from 24 September to 1 October. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal President Heinz Fischer.

On 23 September, a high-level UNGA meeting was held on the Millennium Development Goals and people with disabilities (High-level Meeting on Disability and Development) at which Federal President Heinz Fischer delivered a statement. The final declaration adopted at this meeting calls for the worldwide inclusion of people with disabilities and/or their participation in the post-2015 process.

Federal President Heinz Fischer addressed the GA on the official opening day (24 September) of the General Debate. In the Austrian speech he called
for special attention to be paid to the eradication of hunger in preparing the post-2015 development goals. The Federal President expressed his concern over the situation in Syria and its impact on the region and underlined the need for the situation to be referred to the International Criminal Court (ICC). While appreciating the intensified mediation efforts in the Middle East Conflict, he stressed his conviction that a break-through would mean a decisive step towards stabilisation of the entire region. With great pleasure he noted the fact that the Vienna-based Office of the Special Representative of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative (SE4All) had commenced its activities in the middle of the year. In this context he drew attention to the fact that Austria also hosts the newly established International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) that has already scored some success in fighting corruption. The Federal President recalled the successful major conference held by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum (UNAOC) in Vienna in February and the inauguration of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue that is also based in Vienna on 26 November 2012. He especially welcomed the adoption of the ATT by the UNGA and stressed his hope that the Iranian nuclear issue can be resolved by negotiations. Emphasising that the limited progress towards nuclear disarmament caused him considerable concern, the Federal President called for making the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons the focus of attention. He appreciated the work done by the Human Rights Council (HRC) and emphasized that Austria as a current member is fully supporting the Council’s efforts by launching targeted initiatives aimed at the safety of journalists, the protection of religious minorities and the promotion of the rights of the child. He expressed his concern over the increasing number of human rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity. Before coming to the end of his address, Federal President Heinz Fischer informed the GA that the Austrian Federal Government is considering setting up a Rule of Law Trust Fund to support international stakeholders in strengthening the rule of law.

On 25 September, Federal President Heinz Fischer participated in and delivered a statement at a “special event to follow up efforts made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals”. On the same day, the Federal President addressed the high-level side event organised by Austria and the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights Navanethem Pillay in commemoration of the 1993 Vienna Human Rights Conference. At the invitation of the President of the UNGA John Ashe, the Austrian Federal President, as the only Western Head of State and Government, delivered a speech at the opening segment of the High-level Meeting of the UNGA on Nuclear Disarmament on 26 September. At the Ministerial Meeting of the UN Alliance of Civilisations Group of Friends and at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (both held on 27 September), Austria was represented by Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle.
During the Ministerial Week, both Federal President Heinz Fischer and Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle held numerous bilateral meetings and talks.

6.2.2. Political Affairs

6.2.2.1. Middle East

On 15 May, the UNGA adopted a further resolution on the conflict in Syria, Austria and further 106 Member States voted in favour (12 Member States against and 59 abstained). Based on a resolution by the Third Committee, the UNGA, again with a clear majority of votes, adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Syria in December.

Set up by the UN Secretary General (UNSG) and headed by the Swede Ake Sellström, the expert mission investigating the potential use of chemical weapons in Syria concluded in its interim report presented on 16 September that chemical weapons had been used in Gouta near Damascus on 21 August. Presenting the mission’s final report on 13 December, the UNSG reported that according to the independent experts, chemical weapons had indeed been used several times and in a number of places both against military targets and against civilians. However, neither the interim nor the final report included any statements on who had used chemical weapons.

With the exception of the resolutions on the “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People” and on a “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”, the EU adopted a common voting policy at the 68th UNGA on the 19 annual resolutions on the Middle East. While the other EU Member States abstained from voting, Malta and Cyprus, which are members of the abovementioned committee, voted in favour of these two resolutions. Together with the other EU Member States, Cyprus abstained from voting on the resolution on “The Syrian Golan” at the 68th UNGA. As in previous years, the resolution on “Assistance to the Palestinian people”, sponsored by the EU, was again the only resolution on the Middle East adopted by consensus by all UN Member States.

6.2.2.2. Disarmament and International Security

During its three-week session in April, the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) deliberated on recommendations towards reaching the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. Austria contributed one of the co-chairpersons and supported overcoming disagreements in the field of nuclear disarmament.

On 26 September, the UNGA convened for the first-ever High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament to discuss the urgent need for making concrete
progress towards a nuclear arms free world at the highest political level. The importance attached to nuclear disarmament by the majority of the international community was highlighted by the participation of the UNSG and numerous Heads of State and Government in the meeting. In a keynote address delivered by Federal President Heinz Fischer, Austria called for stepping-up efforts towards global disarmament and stigmatising, banning and eliminating nuclear weapons.

The working group for taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations initiated by Austria, Mexico and Norway based on UNGA resolution 67/56, started its activities in Geneva in 2012 and very impressively highlighted the potential for multilateral nuclear disarmament initiatives in the UNGA context. Thanks to pro-active civil society involvement and despite the negative attitude of the nuclear arms states, the working group succeeded in putting together a substantial report including a catalogue of concrete measures required to make progress towards nuclear disarmament.

In autumn, the UNGA’s First Committee that deals with disarmament and international security focused on nuclear disarmament resolutions. Austria had most actively contributed to preparing the follow-up resolution on taking forward nuclear disarmament negotiations, which was adopted by a large majority. Likewise it was suggested to convene a High-Level International UN Conference on International Disarmament by 2018 and to prepare a discourse on nuclear disarmament in all relevant bodies. A statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use, presented on behalf of 125 delegations, also attracted considerable attention. In this context, Austria made substantial contributions and also underlined the pioneering role it played in the field of multilateral nuclear disarmament initiatives. With respect to conventional arms, Austria stressed the importance of protecting civilians and banning the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas as well as the development of armed drones and autonomous weapons systems and supported the accelerated entry into force of the ATT.

6.2.3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs

In the field of economic, development and environmental affairs, work focused on the implementation of the resolutions adopted at the Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and discussions relating to the post-2015 development agenda, which is to replace the MDGs as of 2016. The Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals and the Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Financing thus commenced activities. These bodies are to provide a very relevant contribution to the post-2015 development agenda and formulate concrete sustainability goals.
Furthermore, a substantial reform of ECOSOC was adopted and a high-level political forum established which is to hold alternating meetings every four years in the context of the UNGA at Heads of State and Government level (the first such meeting was held on 25 September) and annually at ministers’ level in the ECOSOC context. Both bodies will be responsible for central coordination of the three dimensions of sustainable development (the economic, social and environmental pillars) and define the way forward in these areas.

The post-2015 development agenda was also a central topic on the agenda of the Second Committee of the UNGA (Economic and Social Affairs). A large number of resolutions on various issues such as the global economic crisis, environmental aspects, biodiversity, the least developed countries, people with disabilities, sustainable development of mountain regions, sustainable agriculture, follow-up work to the Rio+20 Conference etc. were also adopted, predominantly by consensus. The UNGA also decided to proclaim 3 March as World Wildlife Day.

(For further information on the Economic and Social Council, please also see Chapter 6.5., for further information on international environmental aspects, please also see Chapter 13.)

6.2.4. Human Rights

Please see Chapter 8.2.

6.2.5. International Drug Control

The Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) coordinates all drug-related UN activities, assists Member States in implementing the drug conventions and is responsible for planning and implementing programmes aimed at fighting illicit drugs. Austria continued to support UNODC efforts and provided voluntary contributions to the funding of numerous international projects and programmes aimed at fighting drugs.

The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which meets annually in Vienna, is the leading UN entity (lead agency) for implementing the UN’s drug policy. At the CND’s 56th session, held in Vienna from 11 to 15 March, the UN Member States stressed the importance of UNODC’s work in the field of international drug policy. The address by the Bolivian Head of State Evo Morales, who explained why Bolivia was re-joining the Drug Convention of 1961 attracted much interest. At the session a total of 15 resolutions and 2 decisions on various issues were unanimously adopted, including on improving international cooperation in identifying new psychoactive substances (NPS), fighting drug smuggling and trafficking in West Africa, and on combating illicit traffic in opiates originating from Afghanistan. UN
guidelines on cultivating alternative agricultural crops instead of drugs were also adopted by consensus. As in previous years, Austria specifically supported activities that are directed at sustainable drug demand reduction.

In the UNGA’s Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs), Austria contributed actively to negotiations on a resolution on International Cooperation against the World Drug Problem, which the UNGA adopted again by consensus in December. One of the main topics addressed by the resolution was preparatory work ahead of the UNGA Special Session on Drugs in 2016.

### 6.2.6. International Crime Prevention

As in the field of drug control, Austria provided significant support to the activities launched by the UN in international crime prevention. The implementation of the relevant obligations by the UN Member States was reviewed at the 22nd Session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) held in Vienna from 22 to 26 April. A priority topic dealt with by the Commission was environmental crime and Austria contributed actively to the relevant discussions. At the meeting, the CCPCJ adopted 21 resolutions by consensus inter alia on the following topics: international cooperation in fighting genocide as well as crimes against humanity, combating trafficking in cultural property, curbing illicit trafficking in fraudulent medicines, taking action against gender-related killing of women and girls, strengthening international cooperation to combat cybercrime, curbing trafficking in protected species of wild flora and fauna and defining standard minimum rules for the treatment of prisoners. Austria was the main sponsor of resolutions aimed at fighting terrorism and eliminating violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice. Austria also read out a declaration on the protection of journalists and supported a side event on “fighting corruption – the rule of the media”.

In the Third Committee of the UNGA, Austria contributed actively to negotiations on the resolution on strengthening the UN crime prevention and criminal justice programme, in particular with regard to its technical cooperation capacity. The UNGA adopted the resolution by consensus in December.

At UN level, Austria worked actively towards a coherent and global approach aimed at preventing and fighting terrorism (see Chapter 6.2.13.3.). As in previous years, Austria made a voluntary contribution to the Vienna-based Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) of the UNODC. The TPB is the leading provider of technical assistance to UN Member States for the implementation of their legal obligations in the fight against terrorism and has already assisted more than 150 states in this field.
6.2.7. Social Policy

The resolutions on social topics (inter alia on youth, family, ageing, social integration) dealt with by the UNGA’s Third Committee were adopted by consensus in December. Regarding the G77 initiative on ageing, which had caused major controversy last year, the relationship between the Independent Expert on the enjoyment of all human rights by older persons, established by the HRC, and the relevant working group set up by the UNGA gave rise to discussions. The EU strives to promote cooperation between both mechanisms and prevent duplication of work.

The empowerment of people in fighting poverty, promoting social integration and full employment were the main themes addressed at the 51th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) held in New York from 6 to 15 February. The CSocD adopted five resolutions on ageing, youth, people with disabilities in the development agenda, the social dimension of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), and on preparing and celebrating the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family. Federal Minister Rudolf Hundstorfer presented the outcome of the Ministerial Conference held by the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in Vienna in September 2012, which was dedicated to the regional review of the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing. Austria contributed to the debates, delivered national statements and presented progress and efforts in the fields of labour market policy, youth employment and youth policy.

On 17 January, UNSG Ban Ki-moon appointed Ahmad Alhendawi from Jordan as his Envoy on Youth. The establishment of this function is part of a comprehensive package of measures launched by the UNSG with a view to enshrining the topic of youth – one of the UNSG’s five priorities for his second term in office – more strongly in the UN. The Envoy on Youth and his office receive funding from voluntary contributions made by the UN Member States, to which Austria contributed by providing funding from the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, and the FMEIA. The Envoy on Youth is on the one hand responsible for advocating the needs and rights of young people in the UN and its Member States, and on the other hand for sharing information on the UN’s work with young people. In this context the Envoy on Youth mainly focused on issues related to youth employment, youth civic engagement and gender-related aspects.

6.2.8. International Women’s Affairs

See Chapter 8.2.3.

172
6.2.9. Humanitarian Affairs

In 2013, contributions and contribution pledges by UN Member States to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) totalled approx. 507 million US dollars. At a high-level conference on 13 December, contribution pledges amounting to around 404.6 million US dollars were made for 2014.

The thematic resolutions adopted in the UNGA plenary dealt with coordination of humanitarian aid, safety and security of humanitarian personnel, cooperation in providing humanitarian assistance following natural disasters, Chernobyl, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and support for anti-mine programmes. Plenary resolutions with a regional focus related to assistance to the Palestinian people, assistance to refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa and support for survivors of the genocide in Rwanda. In the relevant negotiations, the EU assumed a pivotal role as one of the most important humanitarian players. Austria supported six humanitarian resolutions as co-sponsor.

For information on general humanitarian affairs in the UN context, please see Chapter 9.2.

6.2.10. Peaceful Use of Outer Space

The 56th session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) held in Vienna from 12 to 21 June was a special success for Austria. Following lengthy preparations, the resolution on national space legislation, which is based on an Austrian initiative, was adopted at the session and subsequently also by the UNGA.

Austria provided continued support for the UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UNSPIDER) of the Vienna-based Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA). The UNGA highlighted the very relevant role played by the technical advisory missions that are co-funded by Austria.

Two Austrian satellites (TUGSAT-1 and UNIBRITE) that measure brightness variations of luminous stars thus contributing to a better understanding of galaxies’ development were successfully launched. The annual space symposium in Graz celebrated its 20th anniversary and continued its thematic series on space weather.

6.2.11. Administrative and Budgetary Affairs

The topic that featured most prominently on the agenda of the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Affairs) was the regular UN budget for the biennium 2014–2015 on which agreement was reached on 27 December following lengthy negotiations. The budget was set at 5.53 billion US dol-
The United Nations and its Specialised Agencies

Dollars and 10,118 posts on the staffing table. It is thus 35 million US dollars below the final revised budget for the biennium 2012–2013 (5.565 billion US dollars). For the first time in the UN’s history the substantial reductions in the UN Secretariat’s staffing table called for by the Western states have been realised. The objective pursued by these cuts is to encourage UNSG Ban Ki-moon to seek new approaches – especially in terms of management – towards modernising the organisation in the long term thus also adapting it to the budgetary situation of the large contributors. The UNSG was invited to commission an independent study on the currently automatic adjustments of the UN budget due to inflation and exchange rate fluctuations.

The introduction of a mobility framework for UN staff, sought by the UNSG in order to continue with the human resources management reform was again thwarted and the relevant negotiations postponed until March 2014.

The annual budget adopted for peacekeeping operations (PKO) from July 2013 to June 2014 amounted to 7.8 billion US dollars and was above last year’s level as a PKO had been established in Mali (MINUSMA).

6.2.12. UN Procurement

The objectives pursued by Austrian foreign policy also include safeguarding Austria’s economic policy interests in Europe and all over the world. This principle also relates to appropriate participation in public procurement of international organisations like the UN.

According to the 2012 Annual Statistical Report on United Nations Procurement, 0.9% of all orders were awarded to Austrian companies, which corresponds to a total value of 138.7 million US dollars (2011: 110.1 million). The total value of orders awarded by the UN system amounted to 15.4 billion US dollars in 2012 (+ 7% compared with 2011).

The goods sourced by the UN system in Austria included mainly equipment for IT, products for medical use and labs, as well as vehicles. Services were mainly purchased in the fields of construction, maintenance and cleaning.

More than 70% of the orders awarded to Austrian companies were placed by the IAEA.

Potential UN contractors are recommended to adhere to the UN Global Compact’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) principles. In 2012, Global Compact companies were awarded an estimated share of 22.3% of all UN orders.

6.2.13. International Law

The main items on the agenda of the UNGA’s Sixth Committee (Legal Committee) were the debate on the report of the UN International Law Commission (ILC) during annual International Law Week, topics related to the rule of
The General Assembly

law, measures to eliminate international terrorism, the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction and the question of whether to grant observer status in the UNGA to international organisations. The Sixth Committee also dealt with the annual report of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the law of transboundary aquifers.

6.2.13.1. International Law Week

International Law Week, named after an Austrian proposal, brings together all legal advisers of UN Member States to discuss international law issues in the UNGA’s Sixth Committee. This year’s meeting was held from 28 October to 1 November and focused on the ILC report on current international law issues such as reservations towards treaties, the immunity of state officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, protection of persons in the event of disasters, customary international law, provisional application of treaties and protection of the environment in connection with armed conflict. Austria made detailed statements on all agenda items, addressing for instance the issue of democratic legitimacy in connection with provisional application prior to parliamentary approval. On the question of immunity of state officials from foreign criminal jurisdiction, Austria stressed that initial general investigations must never be obstructed by immunity.

Under the Austro-Swedish initiative aimed at revitalising the Sixth Committee, an interactive dialogue meeting was again held with Special Rapporteurs from the International Law Commission on the topics of reservations against treaties and crimes against humanity.

6.2.13.2. The Rule of Law

The sub-theme of this year’s debate was peaceful dispute settlement. Deliberations were held against the background of the High-Level UNGA Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels held in 2012 on this topic. The great importance of the declaration then adopted (A/RES/67/1) was again highlighted. Under Art. 41 of this declaration, UNSG Ban Ki-moon is requested to propose ways and means of further developing, with wide stakeholder participation, such close links between the rule of law and the UN’s three main pillars (peace and security, human rights and development) and to include this in his report to the UNGA at its 68th session. These proposals will now be submitted in summer 2014. As coordinator of the Rule of Law Group of Friends, Austria organised a number of meetings, inter alia on rule of law aspects in the context of the post-2015 development agenda.

6.2.13.3. Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism

The last few years have been marked by lack of progress in resolving open issues related to developing a comprehensive convention on international
terrorism and holding a high-level conference on this topic. In April, the Ad-Hoc Committee established to resolve these open issues stated that progress will require more time. In line with UNGA resolution 68/119 no Ad-Hoc Committee will be convened for 2014.

6.2.13.4. Observer Status in the UN General Assembly

Discussions again focused on applications for granting observer status to organisations where it was controversial whether they met the criteria defined in UNGA resolution 49/426. Four organisations were eventually granted observer status, one application was withdrawn and two moved to the 69th UNGA.

On the initiative of Austria, the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA), an international organisation based in Austria, was granted observer status in the GA by UNGA resolution 68/122.

6.2.13.5. Scope and Application of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction

Discussions focused on enshrining the principle of universal jurisdiction in existing international law as well as on questions relating to its application and potential politicization. In this context, the essential role this principle played in the fight against impunity was reiterated. Based on informal papers on the topic, the working group (chaired by Costa Rica) continued to prepare a working concept.

A number of delegations (including from Austria) supported a referral of the topic to the ILC in the future, which was, however, not included in UNGA resolution 68/117 due to lack of agreement.

6.2.13.6. Further Topics

As host country, Austria coordinated the annual resolutions on the work of UNCITRAL including on resolution 68/109 on the new rules on transparency in treaty-based investor-state arbitration. On the topic of the law of transboundary aquifers, deliberations dealt mainly with the question of the future format of the ILC draft articles from 2008. Following discussions, they were added as an annex to UNGA resolution 68/118 and governments were recommended to use them as guidance for relevant agreements.

The UNGA furthermore adopted resolutions inter alia on the responsibility of states for internationally wrongful acts, on consideration of prevention of transboundary harm from hazardous activities and allocation of loss in the case of such harm (in both cases the decision on the future format of draft articles was moved to the 71st UNGA), criminal accountability of United Nations officials and experts on mission, on the United Nations Programme of Assistance in the Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation
of International Law, on diplomatic protection, on the report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, and the Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country.

The presidents of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and of the International Criminal Tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) presented their annual reports to the UNGA.

6.3. The United Nations Security Council

6.3.1. Cross-sectional Issues

6.3.1.1. The Reform Debate

The debate on a reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), which has been ongoing for several years, stagnated in 2013. The chairman of the intergovernmental negotiations on SC reform had suggested “genuine” negotiations for the 67th UNGA based on a working document to be prepared by him and the possible holding of a high-level meeting on SC reform. As had been the case in the past, these suggestions could not be put into practice due to ongoing disagreement among UN Member States.

The tenth round of negotiations was launched during the 68th session of the UNGA. In October, the President of the GA appointed an Advisory Group of 6 Permanent Representatives, representing the various groups and negotiation positions. This body – whose establishment had also been subject to some criticism – is to contribute to adding new momentum to the discussions. Negotiations will continue in 2014. However, due to the fact that positions still diverge substantially, and are especially far apart as regards enlargement to include new permanent members, no tangible progress is anticipated for the foreseeable future.

In the context of a working group of 22 like-minded states (ACT – Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group) set up in May, Austria supports an improvement of UNSC working methods in its current configuration. As part of these efforts, Austria on 29 October participated in a UNSC debate on the latter’s working methods. The Austrian statement focused on UNSC cooperation with UNPK troop contributing countries and the role played by the rule of law in the UNSC’s work.

6.3.1.2. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

In 2013, the UNSC held two open debates on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Under the Presidency of South Korea, the UNSC in February agreed on adopting a Presidential Statement (PRST/2013/2), which inter alia establishes a system for reports on this topic to be submitted by the UNSG
every 18 months. Austria participated in the discussion and contributed a
**national statement** in which it reiterated its call for the situation in Syria
to be referred to the ICC by the UNSC, underlined the impact of explosive
weapons and informed about the successful training seminar on the protec-
tion of civilians conducted at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Con-
flict Resolution in December 2012. In response to criticism voiced by Austria
and other Member States regarding the fact that the UN Emergency Relief
Coordinator had not taken part in the debate, she was invited to participate
in the next debate in August (under Argentinian Presidency) and to inform
the UNSC. Recurring issues addressed in the debates were, apart from the
situation in Syria, humanitarian access, the protection of healthcare facili-
ties, schools, journalists and humanitarian personnel, the use of explosive
weapons in densely populated areas, the use of drones and the Arms Trade
Treaty. In July, Austria also participated in a debate on the protection of jour-
nalists chaired by the USA.

On 21 and 22 February, an expert conference on the **protection of civilians
under international humanitarian law**, organised jointly by the FMEIA and
the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, was held in Vienna. This **regional work-
shop** formed part of an initiative on Reclaiming the Protection of Civilians
under International Humanitarian Law, launched by Norway in 2009, and
was opened jointly by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Michael Spin-
delegger and the Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide. Representa-
tives from governments, international organisations and civil society dis-
cussed the impact of armed conflict on civilians, improved implementation
of international humanitarian law as well as measures towards promoting
accountability for violations of international humanitarian law. The outcome
of this conference was published in a final document by the chair. On 23 and
24 May, the final conference of this global initiative was held in Oslo and
Austria was represented by the Legal Adviser of the FMEIA, Ambassador
Helmut Tichy.

The inter-disciplinary leadership training programme on the protection of
civilians (PoC) in armed conflict, developed in cooperation with the Federal
Ministry of Defence and Sports and the Federal Ministry of the Interior in
2012, was continued successfully with a programme for international PoC
experts and decision-makers at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Con-
flict Resolution (ASPR). At the same time, Austria supported the UN Secre-
tariat in holding a training programme for the protection of civilians in armed
conflict directed at leaders of peace operations together with the ASPR.

### 6.3.1.3. Women, Peace and Security – Fighting Sexual Violence in Conflict

The annual open UNSC debate on women, peace and security was held on
18 October and involved inter alia the UNSG and the new Director of UN
Women. Despite progress addressed in the recent report presented by the
The United Nations Security Council

UNSG (S/2013/525), lack of consistent implementation of the ground-breaking SC Resolution 1325 adopted in 2000 was identified. Under the Presidency of Azerbaijan, the UNSC unanimously adopted UNSC resolution 2122 (2013), which provides for concrete steps towards improved implementation of SC resolution 1325 (2000) in the UNSC’s work. This is the first SC resolution since 2009 to cover the entire bandwidth of thematic issues related to women in conflict and post-conflict situations. Austria was one of the resolution’s co-sponsors and contributed in its national capacity to the debate. The topics highlighted in the Austrian statement included the importance of gender-specific transitional justice mechanisms, the role played by the UNSC in putting an end to impunity for serious human rights violations as well as equal participation of women in political and public life. Austria also presented its national and international efforts towards implementing UNSC resolution 1325 (2000).

In addition, the UNSC held two open debates on conflict related sexual violence. In April, the UNSG and his Special Representative (SRSG) on Sexual Violence in Conflict Zainab Bangura presented the UNSG’s recent report on this issue (S/2013/149). For the second time this report contained a list of parties to a conflict that are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence in situations of armed conflict on the UNSC agenda. The topics addressed during the debate included the role of criminal law prosecution of perpetrators as well as the imposition of sanctions by the UNSG in order to prevent sexual violence, the need for access to medical, psycho-social and legal services to support victims of sexual violence as well as ensuring gender expertise in UNPKO. Under the Presidency of the United Kingdom, the UNSC subsequently in June unanimously adopted SC resolution 2106 (2013), which had been introduced by a large number of co-sponsors (including Austria). Reflecting the still difficult negotiations and diverging positions within the UNSC on this topic, the resolution contains only few new elements. The debate’s high-level format and the participation of actress Angelina Jolie, who is at the same time active for the UNHCR, however, served to attract more attention to and raise awareness for this topic. Austria contributed to the debates in the context of the statements delivered by the EU, the Human Security Network and the Group of Friends on Women, Peace and Security.

On the initiative of the United Kingdom, a Declaration of Commitment to End Sexual Violence in Conflict was adopted in September on the margins of the UNGA and signed by 137 states including Austria.

6.3.1.4. Children and Armed Conflict

At the annual UNSC debate on children and armed conflict, held on 17 June and chaired by the United Kingdom, the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict Leila Zerrougui presented the UNSG’s annual report (S/2013/245). In contrast to previous practice, however, the meeting was not held in open
The debate format, which substantially restricted non-SC members’ opportunities to speak (among others the Human Security Network, of which Austria is a member, did not have the opportunity to voice its opinion during the debate). This triggered uncommon partial criticism of the SRSG’s mandate. The meeting’s outcome was a Presidential Statement negotiated by Luxembourg (S/PRST/2013/8), which did not, however, include any essentially new elements. The main items addressed in the protracted negotiations were contact between the UN and non-state armed groups, but also issues related to the Special Representative’s mandate and referral to the ICC.

6.3.1.5. Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee
Since the end of its membership of the UNSC in 2009/2010, Austria has continued its consistent commitment to strengthening the rule of law in the UNSC, supporting in particular fair procedures and effective legal remedies in the sanctions committees. The Office of the Ombudsperson, established by the UNSC in resolution 1904 (2009) and substantially strengthened by resolution 1989 (2011), to which natural and legal persons on the consolidated list of the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee may turn to in order to request delisting, has enabled important progress in this respect. In the context of an informal group of like-minded states on targeted sanctions, Austria continues to support further improvements especially in the Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee but also in other UNSC sanctions committees. In a declaration delivered on behalf of the like-minded states on 27 September in the UNSC, Austria called for expanding the Office of the Ombudsperson’s mandate to also include other sanctions regimes. Referring to relevant sentences passed by European supreme courts in 2013 (primarily the ECJ’s judgement of 18 July in the “Kadi II” case), the UNSC was also invited to take further steps towards improving the quality of listings and the reasons given for such listings.

6.3.2. Peacekeeping Operations
By the end of the year more than 100,000 troops, police officers and civilian experts were deployed in a total of 15 peacekeeping operations (UNPKO) and one special political mission. In the course of the year, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) stepped up its efforts towards improving the PKO’s military capacities and increasing their efficiency. In the middle of the year, the UN replaced the African-led International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA) with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in line with the mandate established by UNSC Resolution 2100 (2013). Shortly before, the UNSC had for the first time in the history of UN-led PKO authorised the establishment of an Intervention Brigade to neutralise armed groups under resolution 2098 (2013) relating to the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the
Congo (MONUSCO). In December, the increasingly robust nature of PKO and the provision of modern technology and equipment called for by the DPKO, translated in the UN’s first-ever use of unmanned aerial vehicles in the context of MONUSCO.

Pakistan, as the chair of the UNSC’s PKO Working Group, organised regular working group sessions on PKO cross-cutting themes that were open to all UN troop contributing countries. Austria participated in these meetings and contributed a national statement to the working group session of 3 June that was dedicated to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. In 2013, the UNGA’s Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations could not agree on a substantial report, which was mainly attributable to differences of opinion between the most important groups regarding the committee’s working methods. With a view to resolving the controversial procedural issues a Group of Friends of the Committee’s Chairman was set up in autumn and agreed on a timetable for the preparation of the Committee’s four week session in 2014.

6.3.2.1. Austria’s Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations

On 6 June, the Federal Government decided to withdraw the Austrian soldiers from the UN Disengagement Observer Force on the Golan (UNDOF). This decision was taken based on the increasing deterioration of the security situation in the operations area since the outbreak of the Syrian conflict. On 29 November 2012, Austrian and Croatian UN peacekeepers had been shot at nearby Damascus leaving several Austrian peacekeepers partly heavily wounded. In spring, UNDOF soldiers were repeatedly abducted and detained. Against the background of these developments, Austria via its Permanent Representation to the UN in New York repeatedly turned to the UNSC and to the DPKO. At a meeting of UNDOF troop providers with the UNSC members, requested in a joint letter by Austria and the Philippines to the UNSC of 15 March, Austria again on 22 March called on the UNSC and the DPKO to undertake every effort towards guaranteeing the safety and security of the Austrian soldiers and ensuring implementation of the mandate. The security situation in the UNDOF operating area, however, continued to deteriorate over the following few weeks. On the morning of 6 June there were severe incidents during which the guard post at the Quneitra border crossing in the demilitarised zone was briefly occupied by Syrian rebels. With the increasing intensity of fighting between the Syrian army and the opposition, the use of heavy arms and weapons and the threat to the mission’s supply paths, the uncontrollable and immediate risk to Austrian soldiers had increased to an unacceptable level.

At the end of the year and following withdrawal from UNDOF, the number of personnel contributed by Austria to UN operations amounted to 171 soldiers including the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), five military observers with the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), four staff
officers with the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and two military observers with the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Furthermore, the Federal Council decided on 19 December to second a staff member of the Federal Ministry of the Interior as a police liaison officer to the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as of 1 January 2014. Likewise on 19 December, the National Council decided that Austria will participate in the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons – United Nations Joint Mission for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic (JMIS) by providing an air transport contingent (please also see Chapter 3.4.2.1.2. Syria).

6.3.3. Country-specific and Regional Issues

The country-specific and regional issues dealt with by the UNSC are addressed on a country by country level in Chapter 3.

6.4. The UN Peacebuilding Commission

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in December 2005 by the UNGA and the UNSC as a joint subsidiary organ, thus assuming a special position within the UN system. The PBC was created to support peace efforts in countries emerging from armed conflict and to assist them in post-conflict peace-building, recovery, reconstruction and development in order to avoid relapse into renewed conflict. It assists countries in bridging the frequently identified gaps between the end of a peacekeeping operation and the beginning of effective development cooperation (DC) efforts. Chaired by Croatia, the PBC in its seventh session period again undertook efforts towards improving its efficiency and its contribution to peace building in the respective countries.

Of the PBC’s six country-specific configurations (Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic, Liberia and Guinea), the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) deteriorated dramatically over the course of the year following the ousting of President Bozizé by the rebel coalition Séléka in March. By contrast, efforts towards peace building in Sierra Leone are clearly making more positive progress: in November, the country specific configuration of the PBC for Sierra Leone, in which Austria participates, conducted its first-ever Peacebuilding Assessment Mission. In this context, future cooperation between the PBC and the government of Sierra Leone following the withdrawal of the Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSL) scheduled for the end of March 2014 was also analysed.
6.5. The Economic and Social Council

6.5.1. General Part

On 28 January, Austria took over the Vice-Presidency of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Consequently the whole year was marked by intensive involvement in preparing a large number of meetings and in decision-taking in the Council’s bureau.

On 22 April, the Global Dialogue on Financing for Development brought together ministers of finance, representatives of national banks and representatives of international financial institutions in New York to discuss the ECOSOC’s agenda from a financial perspective. The Governor of the Austrian National Bank Claus J. Raidl also delivered a speech at this meeting.

The Substantive Session of the ECOSOC was held in Geneva from 2 to 27 July. The Annual Ministerial Review focused on the role played by economy, technology, innovation and culture in promoting sustainable development. Both UNSG Ban Ki-moon and the President of ECOSOC highlighted the importance of innovation in fighting poverty. During the High-level Segment of the Substantive Session a high-level dialogue was held with finance and trade institutions.

During the General Segment of the ECOSOC, which was chaired by Austria, a decision on the consultative status of NGOs was taken and the “Homo-sexuelle Initiative Wien” was among the NGOs to be granted this important status. The functional commissions based at the UN headquarters in Vienna also had the opportunity to present themselves, which facilitated discussions on important issues such as drug control as well as combating and preventing crime.

Following nine months of inter-governmental negotiations, a reform of the ECOSOC was adopted on 20 September by UNGA resolution 68/1. The core aspects of this reform relate inter alia to the adjustment of the Council’s programme of work to a July-to-July cycle, the virtual end to the alternation of sessions between New York and Geneva in favour of New York as well as the formulation of a main theme for the annual programme of work for both the ECOSOC and its numerous subsidiary bodies. The High-level Political Forum provided for in Resolution 67/290 is to take place annually from 2014 onwards in the context of the ECOSOC Ministerial Meeting, while the High-level Segment will convene in July. The political objectives to be pursued in the three dimensions (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development are to be defined in this framework.

6.5.2. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The Geneva-based United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of five UN regional commissions. It is a multilateral platform
that brings together Europe including all successor states to the former Soviet Union as well as Canada, the USA and Israel. The organisation aims to promote economic cooperation among Member States through the development of regulations and norms, technical cooperation in the field of transport, environment, energy, trade and statistics. Austria supports the UNECE in particular in the thematic fields of energy-efficient housing construction and ageing societies, in projects related to trans-European roads and trans-European railways as well as in the environmental sector. The outcome document of the review of the 2005 UNECE reform was adopted at the 65th UNECE session held in April. The review process aimed at assessing the relevance of the various areas of work and optimising the use of resources.

6.6. The International Court of Justice

Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague is the only one not located in New York. In 1947, the ICJ dealt with its first case and meanwhile 156 disputes have been handled. Currently, eleven cases are pending before the court of which four are new. Bolivia turned to the ICJ in order to instigate proceedings against Chile in connection with the two states’ dispute over access to the Pacific Ocean. Nicaragua requested the ICJ to define the delimitation (single maritime boundary) of the continental shelf between Nicaragua and Colombia and also instituted proceedings against Colombia for violation of its sovereign rights and maritime spaces defined by the ICJ’s judgement of 2012. In December, Timor-Leste requested the ICJ to impose provisional measures against Australia for the seizure and detention of documents relating to pending arbitration procedures.

In the border dispute between Burkina Faso and Niger, the ICJ delivered its judgement in April and determined the course of the boundary. In July, the Court designated three experts to advise the two states in the demarcation process. The oral proceedings in the whaling dispute (Australia versus Japan with New Zealand intervening) were concluded in July. In September, the proceedings instituted in 2008 by Ecuador against Columbia for aerial herbicide spraying were removed from the Court’s list at the request of Ecuador. In November, the Court announced its judgement regarding Cambodia’s request of 2011 for interpretation of the judgement of 1962 on the Temple of Preah Vihear located in the border region between Cambodia and Thailand. The ICJ inter alia found that the Temple is important for both parties and that both Cambodia and Thailand hold responsibility for it and thus both states must cooperate to protect this UNESCO world heritage site.
6.7. The United Nations Specialised Agencies

6.7.1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

The **FAO Conference**, the sovereign Governing Body of the organisation that convenes every second year, met for its **38th session** in Rome from 15 to 22 June. On 14 June 38 states were distinguished for their success towards achieving MDG 1 (reducing extreme poverty rates by half by 2015). The Conference admitted three states to membership: Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and South Sudan, which brings FAO membership figures to 197 (194 Member Nations, the EU as a member, and the Faeroe Island and Tokelau as Associated Members). The FAO adopted its work programme based on its five strategic goals and the budget for the forthcoming biennium 2014/2015. At 1,028 million US dollars it is 2.2 % higher than the 2012/2013 budget (which amounted to 1,005.6 million US dollars). The Conference elected Wilfried Ngirwa (Tanzania) to succeed Frenchman Luc Guyau as new Independent Chairperson of the Council for the period from July 2013 to July 2015.

The **Fifth Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture** was held in Oman from 24 to 28 September. This treaty plays a pivotal role in international cooperation towards preserving agricultural biodiversity and thus also food security. The session was attended by more than 450 participants from all seven FAO regions. Participants inter alia agreed to expand the multilateral system which enables free of charge access to plant genetic material from all over the world and to fund projects in developing countries that contribute to preserving biodiversity.

The **Committee on World Food Security** met from 7 to 11 October involving 135 Member States and 150 civil society and private sector representatives. As well as two round tables on “Biofuels and Food Security” and “Investing in Smallholder Agriculture for Food Security” a further ministerial meeting was held on price volatility.

This year, the motto of **World Food Day**, celebrated every year on the FAO’s founding day 16 October, was “Healthy people depend on healthy food systems”. In honour of World Food Day, Austria organised a discussion event “Think.Eat.Save – Essen für den Müll?” (Think.Eat.Save – food to throw away?) on 2 October.

6.7.2. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

In his first year in office, Director-General Guy Ryder focused on restructuring the International Labour Office and on the social impact of the economic crisis with a special focus on the European debt crisis. Together with the youth employment crisis, this issue also dominated discussions at the **9th European Regional Meeting** in Oslo from 8 to 11 April in which Federal
Minister Rudolf Hundstorfer participated. The discussion outcome was the Oslo Declaration, which was considered a success in terms of its clear wording and regarded as decisive for the ILO’s work in the region.

The 102nd Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) in June focused on social dialogue, the impact of demography on employment and social protection, and “green” jobs. The special proceedings against Myanmar with regard to forced labour issues were terminated after 13 years. The ILC’s Committee on the Application of Standards was able to fulfil its central task in the ILO monitoring system, i.e. the country reviews. However, the underlying problems that had prevented agreement among social partners on a countries list in 2012 (dispute over the interpretation of strike laws and the mandate of the experts’ committee on the implementation of the agreements and recommendations) remained unresolved.

Austria participates as observer in the Sessions of the ILO Governing Body, in which it can make its voice heard via its contributions to important regional groups such as the industrialised market economies group or the EU. The main topics addressed at the session were the biennial budget, internal structural reform, crisis management, and the ILO in the post-2015 UN Development Agenda. In this context, Austria placed the focus on social dialogue, enshrining the ILO goals in the multilateral system, legal issues and standard setting policy.

6.7.3. International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

The Geneva-based ITU is a United Nations agency 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.

The “ITU Telecom World” took place in Bangkok from 19 to 22 November. Focusing especially on further developments in the telecommunications sector in the Asian-Pacific region, the meeting primarily serves as a platform for the exchange of information and knowledge on new technologies and changes in the digital communication sector.

The next major ITU event, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP-14) will be held in Busan (Korea) from 20 October to 7 November 2014.

6.7.4. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

On 28 June, Li Yong former Vice-Minister of Finance of the People’s Republic of China became new Director General of UNIDO. Immediately after taking office he launched numerous reforms and/or a thematic re-orientation process in order to make the organisation fit for the future. An important step in
this direction was taken at the XV session of the UNIDO General Conference in Lima from 2 to 6 December, where the Lima Declaration was adopted in the presence of the UNSG. In this declaration, the UNIDO is called upon to contribute by way of inclusive and sustainable development to the post-2015 development agenda. Austria supports this approach by chairing together with Ethiopia the “Group of Friends of inclusive and sustainable industrial development” in New York.

The projects supported by Austria relate inter alia to the establishment of renewable energies centres in the Pacific island states, youth employment, resource efficiency and private sector development in the priority countries of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC).

6.7.5. International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialised UN agency, based in Montreal, set up to promote the development of international civil aviation in the fields of aviation safety, business, legislation and environmental protection.

Held from 24 September to 4 October in Montreal, the 38th ICAO General Assembly adopted the organisation’s budget and its strategic orientation for the next three years. With respect to the environmental impact of aviation, the EU launched the initiative to prepare a global market-based system for the reduction of air transport greenhouse gas emissions by the next ICAO General Assembly in 2016. The meeting adopted this proposal and decided to introduce such a system by 2020.

The 6th International Air Services Negotiation Conference (ICAN) took place in Durban from 9 to 13 December and brought together 70 countries (including Austria). The meeting served as a forum for bilateral air transport agreement negotiations.

6.7.6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

The Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialised UN agency set up in 1945. By promoting international cooperation in the fields of education, science, culture and communication/information it strives to contribute to ensuring lasting peace and security in the international community.

UNESCO boasts the broadest spectrum of programmes of all UN Specialised Agencies, ranging from the well-known cultural heritage sites to biodiversity, science in developing countries, Tsunami early warning systems social and (bio-) ethical issues, the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural
dialogue to the core areas of education and freedom of the media. Africa and gender equality are the organisation’s global priorities.

The organisation held its 37th session of the General Conference from 5 to 20 November. At this meeting, which is convened every other year, 195 Member States were represented, about 150 of which at the ministerial level. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal Minister Claudia Schmied.

At the 37th session, Member States re-elected UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova for a second term in office until 2017 and adopted a reform of UNESCO’s governing bodies.

In July, a Special Executive Board, composed of 58 members, adopted a resolution aimed at resolving the difficult financial situation the organisation has been faced with since 2011 when the USA stopped paying its contributions. Based on a two-year budget framework of 507 million US dollars (i.e. a budget cut of 146 million US dollars), all UNESCO programmes were subject to a radical review.

In June, the World Heritage Committee met in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and at the beginning of December the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage convened in Baku (Azerbaijan).

Also in June, the “Golden Bull” of 1356, submitted jointly by Austria and Germany as one of the most important documents of cultural and intellectual history of mankind was included in UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register.

A UNESCO Chair on Integrated Water and River Research Management – the sixth such chair in Austria – was established at the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences. The objective pursued by the UNESCO Chairs Programme, set up in 1992, is to establish UNESCO topics more firmly at universities and higher education institutes and to promote cooperation among universities.

6.7.6.1. Austria on the UNESCO Executive Board (2011–2015)

Due to the circumstances UNESCO is currently faced with, Austria’s membership of the Executive Board (2011–2015) has so far been marked by the organisation’s focus on itself.

In the context of the thematic and structural re-dimensioning process that has become necessary in response to the non-payment of US contributions, Austria has explicitly supported a streamlined and more efficient organisation. This includes a reform of the UNESCO Executive Board and governing bodies. From a thematic point of view, Austria has advocated the unrestricted continuation of programmes in the fields of freedom of expression and of the press including the protection of journalists, human rights and of the UNESCO core competences education and culture.
**Human rights** has been one of the thematic priorities pursued by Austria, both in terms of enshrining the topic in the new UNESCO programme and in the context of its membership of the Executive Board’s **Human Rights Committee** – the Committee for Conventions and Recommendations (CR).

At the 37th session of the General Conference, Austria co-sponsored a resolution on Supporting the Global Citizenship Agenda through Education for **Democracy and Human Rights**.

At the Executive Board’s autumn session, Austria presented the **brochure on education for tolerance “Spreading the Word”**. Prepared by the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy – ETC Graz with support from the FMEIA, this booklet provides a summary of best practice examples of human rights education from various regions of the world.

Another priority pursued by Austria is intercultural/interreligious dialogue and the consolidation of programme-related cooperation between UNESCO and the UN Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC). These efforts were also reflected in the **participation of Director-General Irina Bokova** at the 5th UNAOC Global Forum in Vienna.

In cooperation with the FMEIA, the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, and the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Austrian Commission for UNESCO organised a **training seminar for military and civilian representatives of African states**, including also from Mali, on the protection of cultural property in armed conflict. The seminar was held under the UNESCO partnership programme and took place in Vienna from 2 to 6 December.

After the 37th session of the General Conference, Austria will continue to be represented in the CR and in the **Non-Governmental-Partners Committee** under the newly elected Executive Board. In June, Austria was elected a member of the **Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**. Austria will furthermore remain a member of the Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All programme.

### 6.7.7. World Health Organization (WHO)

The 66th World Health Assembly (Geneva, 20 to 28 May) adopted resolutions on a wide range of healthcare issues including non-communicable disease, universal healthcare, polio eradication, health in the post-2015 development agenda and in the MDGs. Global action plans on eye health, mental health and a 12th general programme of work for the next 6-year cycle were adopted. Deliberations also focused on the role of international health regulations and their global implementation in crisis situations in the event of an outbreak of diseases and potential epidemics.

The programme budget for the years 2014–2015 is the first biennial budget consisting of membership contributions and voluntary contributions adopted
by the WHO. At the invitation of WHO Regional Director Zsuzsanna Jakab and Federal Minister Alois Stöger, the WHO European Ministerial Conference on Nutrition and Non-communicable Diseases in the Context of Health 2020 was held in Vienna on 4 and 5 July. The final declaration (Vienna Declaration) inviting the WHO Director General to prepare and present a European action plan on nutrition and food as well as a European physical activity strategy by the 64th and by the 65th WHO Regional Meeting for Europe was adopted by the 63rd WHO Regional Committee for Europe (held in Izmir from 16 to 19 September).

The kick-off event of a 16-day worldwide campaign to counter violence against women and girls was held in Vienna on 25 and 26 November. This European-wide conference entitled “Eliminating Violence against Women – Intersectoral approaches” involved numerous representatives from international organisations, civil society and experts, and was organised by the City of Vienna in cooperation with the WHO/Europe and the European Institute for Gender Equality.

The head of the Department for Public Health and Medical Affairs at the Federal Ministry of Health, Director-General Pamela Rendi-Wagner serves on the Standing Committee of the WHO Regional Committee until 2015.

6.7.8. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1957 and is an autonomous organisation within the United Nations System. The Agency’s principal task is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, enhance nuclear safety and to verify adherence to the commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

In his speech at the conference “Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts” (Vienna 1 to 5 July) Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger stressed that nuclear arms must be eliminated and that the use of nuclear power for civilian purposes must be terminated or at least made safer. He also referred to increased safeguarding measures taken by Austria.

Due to lack of sufficient inspection opportunities, fears over the potential military aspects of the Iranian nuclear programme could, however, not be invalidated in the IAEA Board of Governors. Likewise, no progress was made with respect to Syria. Discussions on the North Korean nuclear programme, which the IAEA inspectors have not been able to access for several years, were continued. Following the change of government in Iran, the country started to cooperate constructively with the IAEA, and agreement on a joint roadmap for the resolution of open issues was reached on 11 November.

At the 57th General Conference in September Austria was elected a member of the Board of Governors for a two-year term.
6.7.9. **Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO)**

Since 1997, the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) has been active in Vienna. As not all of the 44 Key States listed in Annex 2 have ratified the Treaty to date, the CTBT has as yet not entered into force. As of the end of December, the CTBT had been signed by 183 states and ratified by 161. Its entry into force requires ratification by Egypt, China, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA. The CTBT’s international monitoring system consisting of high-tech facilities for seismic, hydro-acoustics, ultrasonic and radio-nuclide measurements is currently being set up. The capabilities of the international monitoring stations were repeatedly demonstrated in the context of the nuclear arms tests performed by North Korea, most recently during the test conducted on 12 February.

The New York Article XIV Conference Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Treaty took place on 27 September. In order to make a further contribution towards accelerating the Treaty’s entry into force and towards a positive discourse in the remaining Annex 2 states promoting the treaty’s ratification, Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo set up a Group of Eminent Persons (GEM) in 2013 in which former Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle represents Austria.

6.7.10. **Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**

The holding of the third review conference (8 to 19 April), a wide range of challenges posed by the developments in Syria and the award of the Nobel Peace Prize made 2013 a historic year for the OPCW.

The Chemical Weapons Convention introduced a ban on all chemical weapons and provides for the phased destruction of all chemical weapons.

On 27 September, the OPCW Executive Council adopted a decision prepared by the USA and Russia for the accelerated destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal by 30 June 2014, which was endorsed on the same day by UNSC Resolution 2118. Headed by Special Coordinator Sigrid Kaag, the Joint OPCW-UN Mission was set up on 16 October in Syria and monitors the implementation of the decisions taken to eliminate Syrian chemical weapons.

(Please also see Chapter 11.1.5.)

6.7.11. **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)**

Established in 1950, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) became a specialised agency of the UN in 1951. It coordinates and supports the global
development of a meteorological and hydrological measuring and observation network. The first session of the Intergovernmental Board on Climate Services (IBCS), which oversees implementation of the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS) adopted in 2012, was held in July. The GFCS aims to promote global exchange and simplified access to climate information, the observation and analysis of climate changes and the derived improvement of forecast accuracy for research into climate change and disaster protection.

6.7.12. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

The London-based International Maritime Organization (IMO) is a specialised UN agency and comprises 170 Member States. Austria has been a member of the IMO since 1975.

The 28th Assembly of IMO met in London from 26 November to 4 December. At the meeting the IMO Member Council for 2014–2015 was elected and includes a number of EU Member States (such as Belgium, Germany, Greece, Malta and Sweden).

The Assembly adopted the organisation’s updated strategic and high-level action plans, the budget for 2014–2015 and the updated Guidelines and Codes. Of special relevance is the adoption of a mandatory review process to determine whether Member States live up to their contractual obligations as flag, port or coastal states.

6.7.13. Excursus: The International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

Set up in 1951, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) currently has 155 Member States and employs more than 7,800 employees worldwide. With its global network of approx. 470 offices, IOM is an important cooperation partner for Austria as it enables Austria to become active in regions where it lacks the necessary infrastructure. In cooperation with IOM, Austria again implemented training activities and a number of projects including in the field of identification of victims of human trafficking, voluntary return and reintegration of migrants (Afghanistan, Georgia, Moldova, Nigeria, Pakistan and Russia). Events jointly organised with IOM included the 5th UNAOC Global Forum in Vienna dedicated to “Promoting Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue” with a special focus on migration and integration and a conference on migration and development held at the FMEIA on 17 December.

As a result of its internal restructuring process, IOM set up a regional office in Vienna that is responsible for East and South East Europe as well as Central Asia. The IOM country office in Vienna is at the same time “National Contact Point Austria” of the European Migration Network, set up by the European
Commission in 2003, and cooperates closely with the relevant Austrian institutions. A new headquarters agreement for the Vienna-based country office was signed by Federal Minister Sebastian Kurz and Director-General of IOM William L. Swing on 27 December.

At the UNGA High-level Dialogue on Migration and Development in October, IOM’s role as a leading organisation in the field of migration was confirmed. IOM is not a UN specialised agency.
7. Austria as the Seat of International Organisations and Institutions

As home to the offices of many international organisations, Austria is a hub for the promotion of peace, security and sustainable development. Along with New York, Geneva and Nairobi, Vienna serves as headquarters of the United Nations. Because of its geopolitical position and its neutral status, Austria already played an important role as a platform for dialogue during the Cold War – a position it succeeded in strengthening with the opening of the Vienna International Centre (UNO City) in 1979 and has continued to develop over the subsequent decades.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was the first to set up headquarters in Vienna in 1957. With currently around 2,400 employees it is also the largest of the Vienna-based UN organisations. Yukiya Amano (Japan) has been Director General of the IAEA since 2009.

Vienna also serves as the centre for all UN efforts towards fighting crime, drug abuse and terrorism. Since 2010, the Vienna-based United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been headed by Under-Secretary-General Yury Fedotov (Russian Federation), who is at the same time Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV).

Another specialised UN agency that established its headquarters in Vienna is the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), set up in 1966 and headed by Director General Li Yong (People’s Republic of China). By providing technical support, counselling services and facilitating research and study programmes, UNIDO supports environmentally sustainable industrialisation in third world countries and in Central and Eastern European reform states and also fosters industrial cooperation between developing and industrialised nations.

The Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), to which a high-tech international data centre is attached, has been active in Vienna since 1997. Since summer 2013, the CTBTO has been headed by Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo (Burkina Faso). From 17 to 21 June the third CTBT Science and Technology Conference (SnT2013), which is co-funded by Austria, was held at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna.


A number of other international organisations are located outside of the Vienna International Centre (VIC). One of these is the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) headed by Secretary General...
Lamberto Zannier (Italy), which has over the last decade developed into an operational organisation in the fields of stability and security.

Since 1965, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has been headquartered in Vienna. This intergovernmental organisation is tasked with coordinating and unifying the petroleum policies of its member countries and ensuring the stabilisation of oil markets in order to ensure efficient, economic and regular supply to customers.

The OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) was set up in 1976 by the OPEC member countries to provide financial support for the social and economic progress of developing countries and is headed by Director-General Al-Herbish (Saudi Arabia).

Since 2003, the Permanent Secretariat of the Alpine Convention (PSAC), short for Convention on the Protection of the Alps, has been based in Innsbruck and maintained a branch office in Bolzano/Bozen. The Austrian Markus Reiterer is the Secretary General of the PSAC and the Presidency of the Alpine Convention for the period 2013/2014 is held by Italy.

Since 2007, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has been based in Vienna and since 2008 it has been headed by Director Morten Kjaerum (Denmark).

In 2011, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which promotes international cooperation in the field of migration, also established a regional office in Vienna that focuses specifically on the East, South East European and Central Asian region.

Austria’s pro-active commitment to promoting international security, disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons was continued with the settlement of important institutions that are active in this field. This included the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP), which opened in February 2011, and the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) that has been based in Austria since November 2011.

Austria’s position as home to international institutions was further highlighted in 2011 with the opening of the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) based in Laxenburg (Lower Austria) and in 2012 with the opening of the Vienna-based International King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID). Since 2011, three institutes of the World Bank organisation (the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development – IBRD, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency – MIGA and the International Finance Corporation – IFC) have been based in Vienna. The office of the International Peace Institute (IPI) was also opened in Vienna in 2011.

2012 saw a further strengthening of Vienna’s position as the seat and headquarters of international organisations. By establishing the office of the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative, launched by the UNSG, the UN further expanded the city’s position as its energy hub. The office commenced
work in summer 2013 following the appointment of former UNIDO Director-General Kandeh Yumkella (Sierra Leone) as UN Special Representative for Sustainable Energy for All in August 2012.

On 22 May, the **Carpathian Convention** (Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians) celebrated the 10th anniversary of its establishment. The Convention’s Interim Secretariat is an outposted office of the Geneva-based United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) and administered by UNEP’s Regional Office in Vienna.
8. The International Protection of Human Rights

8.1. Introduction

The global implementation of human rights standards is a key concern of Austrian foreign policy.

Austria is a member of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC), the UN’s primary human rights body, on which it will serve until the end of 2014. Austria’s specific priorities during its first membership of the HRC include the protection of freedom of religion and conscience, the protection of religious minorities, the promotion of freedom of the media and the protection of journalists as well as the promotion of the rights of the child and the protection of children against violence and exploitation. Austria launches concrete initiatives on these priorities both in the HRC and in other international fora, for instance in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). Other priorities pursued in the context of Austria’s international human rights policy include strengthening human rights of particularly vulnerable persons and groups (minorities, internally displaced persons) and women, strengthening the rule of law in international relations and at national level, the fight against impunity as well as the implementation and dissemination of international humanitarian law. Austria furthermore actively supports the abolition of the death penalty.

On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights 1993, Austria, together with the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, invited relevant international experts to the conference “Vienna+20: Advancing the Protection of Human Rights”. The conference, which was organised jointly with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights (BIM) and the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights Democracy at the University of Graz (UNI-ETC), took place in Vienna on 27 and 28 June. The 130 participants, including several high-level experts, discussed a range of concrete practice-oriented recommendations for strengthening the international human rights system building on the achievements of the 1993 World Conference. In the lead-up to the Vienna+20 conference, a meeting of civil society organisations and the annual meeting of UN Special Rapporteurs were also held in Vienna.

In the context of the anniversary of the World Conference Austria also initiated a panel discussion in the HRC in June, which was attended by State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka. Another event was held in the context of the UNGA and attended by Federal President Heinz Fischer.

The implementation process for the recommendations made to Austria in January 2011 as a result of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the HRC was actively advanced by a steering group, which is led by the Federal Chancellery and the FMEIA and also comprises civil society representatives. At the 24th Regular Session of the HRC in September, Austria presented a voluntary interim report on the status of the recommendations’ implementation.
In June, Austria was subject to a review on the implementation of its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in September on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and in November on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Following these reviews, concrete recommendations on further implementation were made to Austria.

8.2. Human Rights in the United Nations

In the wake of revelations on the mass surveillance scandal involving data collection carried out by US intelligence services, calls were made for strengthening the protection of privacy in the digital age at international level. The issue was thus addressed in numerous debates, featuring on the agenda of inter alia the UNGA, the HRC and UNESCO. Measures aimed at better enshrining the states’ positive obligations to respect this fundamental right were proposed and discussed. Together with Hungary, Liechtenstein and Switzerland, Austria supported an initiative by German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle, who proposed concrete measures with a view to better protecting the right to privacy in the digital age to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay. On the initiative of this country group and Norway, a discussion event on “the right to privacy in the digital age” was subsequently held during the 24th Session of the HRC. A resolution aimed at strengthening the fundamental right to the protection of privacy and the implementation of Art. 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) was introduced on the initiative of Germany and Brazil and co-sponsored inter alia by Austria. Following difficult negotiations, this resolution was eventually adopted by consensus in the Human Rights Committee of the 68th UNGA at the end of November. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights was then invited to develop concrete proposals towards this end.

8.2.1. Human Rights Council

Austria has been a member of the HRC since June 2011. This subsidiary body of the UNGA, which is composed of 47 members, is mandated with promoting and monitoring human rights around the globe and holds at least three regular sessions a year in Geneva. During his visit to Geneva in June, Federal President Heinz Fischer addressed the 23rd Regular Session of the HRC. In his statement, the Federal President inter alia issued an appeal to internationally ostracise capital punishment as an inhuman and cruel form of punishment. During his visit, President Fischer also met UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay.

In the context of its membership Austria pro-actively supports the protection of minorities, religious freedom, the safety of journalists, the protection of
children and women from violence and exploitation, strengthening the rule of law and fighting impunity for human rights violations. Professor Katharina Pabel from the University of Linz is a member of the HRC’s Advisory Committee.

Every four years, all UN Member States are subject to a review of their national human rights situation, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), carried out by the HRC. Providing concrete recommendations on improving the protection of human rights, Austria participated actively in the reviews of Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Burundi, China, Colombia, Cuba, France, Germany, Israel, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Nigeria, Rumania, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Uzbekistan, the United Arab Emirates and the Central African Republic. The next review of Austria will be performed in 2015.

In 2013, Austria again actively contributed to putting countries that flagrantly violate human rights on the HRC’s agenda. In view of the constantly deteriorating situation in Syria, the country featured regularly on the Council’s agenda. The Commission of Inquiry, set up in 2011 by the HRC, continued with its important documentation work thus ensuring that future criminal prosecution of those responsible is possible, and reported in each of the regular sessions on the situation in Syria. The HRC repeatedly condemned the human rights violations committed by all parties to this civil war in the strongest possible terms. In this context, Austria reiterated its suggestion that the International Criminal Court concern itself with the situation in Syria.

The 22nd Regular Session of the HRC in March was opened by a High-Level Segment in which Austria was represented by State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka, who participated inter alia in the high-level panel discussion celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. State Secretary Lopatka also held a number of bilateral consultations.

The high-level panel discussion on the occasion of 20th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights underlined the most important aspects of the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action of 1993. It emphasized the need to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the contribution made by the UN system to the protection of human rights and also highlighted the importance of strengthening international justice for cases of human rights violations, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In its March session, the HRC again adopted a resolution condemning Sri Lanka’s lack of accountability for the atrocities of the civil war. The mandates of the UN Special Rapporteurs on Iran, Myanmar and Haiti were extended by one year. A Commission of Inquiry was set up in the light of the severe and systematic violations of human rights in North Korea. For the first time, the mandate of a Special Rapporteur was established on Mali. The situation in Libya was addressed in a resolution focusing on technical support to the
North African country. Several resolution initiatives dealt with the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. A large number of thematic resolutions were adopted by consensus, including the EU’s initiative on freedom of religion and conscience, the initiative on the rights of the child, and the resolutions on human rights defenders and on the death penalty.

Austria successfully continued its longstanding initiative towards promoting the rights of members of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities. The recommendations prepared by the annual Forum on Minority Issues were for the first time integrated in a resolution on this topic, which was adopted by consensus (for further information on this thematic priority see Chapter 8.6.5.). A panel discussion on the negative impact of corruption on human rights, initiated by Austria and Morocco, was also held, bringing together relevant experts including from the UNODC and the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA). Austria furthermore hosted two informal panel discussions, one focusing on access to justice for women and the other on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Based on an EU initiative, the violation of human rights in Belarus was again strongly condemned at the 23rd Regular Session of the HRC. The HRC also adopted a total of six country-specific resolutions on the situation in Côte d’Ivoire, Somalia, Guinea, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and on Eritrea. The session adopted inter alia resolutions on women’s rights and human trafficking. For the first time a panel discussion was held on human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Austria made a successful contribution by initiating a resolution on internally displaced persons and another resolution on the negative impact of corruption on human rights. The mandate of the Special Rapporteur on internally displaced persons was extended and the resolution focused on the special human rights problems of internally displaced women and girls, especially with respect to sexual and gender-based violence. The resolution on corruption initiated together with Morocco, Brazil, Indonesia and Poland provides for the preparation of a study on the topic by the HRC’s Advisory Committee. Austria also organised two widely acknowledged informal panel discussions on the safety of journalists and women’s rights.

At its 24th Regular Session held in September, the HRC adopted country-specific resolutions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on Somalia. A mandate for an Independent Expert on the Central African Republic was created. The mandates on Sudan and on Cambodia were extended. Furthermore, numerous new initiatives for resolutions were adopted, for instance on the role of civil society, on the impact of arms deliveries on human rights, on political participation and on early marriages and child marriages. Resolutions on the rights of older persons and on cooperation with the UN were also adopted.
Austria successfully introduced four initiatives for decisions and resolutions by the HRC on the protection of journalists, on human rights in the administration of justice and on fighting child mortality as well as on the establishment of a fund to support civil society. In the field of administration of justice, the ban on the death penalty and lifelong detention for juvenile offenders was extended to sentences without the possibility of release. The first debate on human rights of persons deprived of liberty will also be held in the HRC in September 2014. In the context of the initiative on fighting child mortality, it was agreed that the OHCHR and the WHO will cooperate in preparing guidelines for a human rights based approach. The newly established fund for the support of civil society sends out a positive signal regarding the increased involvement of civil society in the work of these HRC bodies.

In addition, Austria organised two informal panel discussions on **human rights education and on persons with disabilities**. Austria also initiated a **supra-regional statement on the safety of journalists** and together with Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Hungary and Norway, it supported a statement by Germany on the protection of privacy in the digital age.

**8.2.2. General Assembly**

A total of **63 resolutions** on human rights-related and social issues were dealt with and adopted by the **Third Committee at the 68th session of the UNGA**. It was again possible to achieve good results on the EU initiatives regarding the human rights situation in Myanmar and the DPRK as well as on freedom of religion or belief. The negotiation process for a resolution on the rights of the child – a joint initiative supported by the EU and Latin American States – however, proved difficult. This was particularly the case with regard to issues relating to non-discrimination because of sexual orientation, education on sexual and reproductive health, and reproductive rights.

The EU also supported resolutions on the human rights situation in **Syria** and in **Iran**. Positive mention must be made of the fact that the two resolutions introduced by the EU and the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on freedom of religion or belief and on religious intolerance respectively were again adopted by consensus. In the negotiations on a resolution on contemporary forms of racism and glorification of Nazism, the EU again succeeded in adopting a common position, i.e. common abstention by all EU Member States.

Austria introduced a resolution on the **rights of minorities** (Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities) in the Third Committee. This resolution was adopted by consensus and co-sponsored by 68 countries (see Chapter 8.6.5. on the thematic priority). The resolution, which was strengthened substantially compared with its predecessor (GA resolution 66/166), focuses on the implementation of the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities.
It, for instance, includes the first ever list of concrete measures to be taken by states in order to implement the Declaration, and it also invites the UNSG to report on the activities launched by Member States, the UN system and other relevant players with a view to implementing the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities.

The UNGA for the first time ever succeeded in adopting a resolution on the human right to water by consensus. The resolution on the right to privacy in the digital age presented by Germany and Brazil, related to the uncovering of mass surveillance activities on the part of the USA, was another first and was adopted by consensus. Austria belonged to a small group of states that introduced a resolution on the safety of journalists (the first UNGA resolution on this topic), which establishes 2 November as International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. A resolution on women-human rights defenders (this covers both female human rights defenders and individuals who defend women’s rights) introduced by Norway, triggered lively discussions and was met with major resistance especially on the part of the African group. Another topic of lively debate was a resolution, introduced by the African Group, which aims at renegotiating a resolution on ending reprisals for cooperation with UN mechanisms on human rights violations that had already been adopted by the HRC. Questions relating to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights sparked highly controversial discussions, also calling into question the achievements made during the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see Chapter 8.2.3.). Austria participated actively in the negotiations on EU initiatives, on the country-specific resolutions, on thematic resolutions on torture, racism, women’s rights and the rights of the child, young people, drugs, crime prevention, human trafficking, the right to water and the right to privacy. Austria contributed to the debates with a national statement by a youth delegate on the topic of social development that was presented in addition to the EU statements. It participated in the interactive dialogues with the Special Representative of the UNSG on Violence against Children, on Children and Armed Conflict, and with the Special Rapporteurs/Independent Experts on the Freedom of Opinion and Expression, Internally Displaced Persons, Minorities and Human Trafficking. Austria also contributed to several side events focusing on women’s rights and the rights of the child.

8.2.3. Commission on the Status of Women

The 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was held in New York from 4 to 15 March. The adoption of a powerful final document on the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women – the main topic of the session – marked the end of the successful meeting. The failure to adopt a final document on women in rural areas in the previous year had increased political pressure on the meeting. The substantial
document contains concrete recommendations for UN Member States, the UN system, civil society, and other stakeholders as well as clear instructions on actions in all areas relevant to combating and preventing violence against women and girls. In the field of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, an area which is very important to Austria and many western Member States, it was even possible to agree on improvements that go beyond the compromises reached thus far.

Austria participated actively in the negotiations and was also a member of the EU negotiation team. Austria also delivered a national statement at the General Debate, organised a side event on the role of the judicial sector in combating violence against women and contributed to a side event on the protection of journalists.

8.3. Human Rights in the European Union

8.3.1. The European Union Human Rights Policy

Pursuant to Article 21 of the Treaty of Lisbon, the objectives of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) include the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law as well as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. Issues related to the EU’s human rights policy within the European Union are dealt with by the EU Council Working Party on Fundamental Rights, Citizens Rights and Free Movement of Persons (FREMP). Issues related to the EU’s human rights policy towards third countries are addressed by the EU Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM), responsible for human rights issues in the EU’s external relations, in cooperation with geographical Council Working Parties. Austria continued its commitment towards better integration of human rights in all EU policy areas, especially for an effective coordination between COHOM and FREMP, in order to ensure a consistent EU human rights policy both inside and outside of the EU.

The implementation of the new EU Human Rights Policy for the CFSP and the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, adopted by the EU External Relations Council in June 2012 was continued with a view to further strengthening the EU’s effectiveness and coherence as a global power for the promotion of human rights. The Policy and the Action Plan provide for the enhanced integration of human rights aspects into other EU policy areas such as trade and development cooperation. In line with a proposal made by Austria, they also take account of measures towards strengthening the protection of journalists and the new EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief. Appointed in July 2012, the first EU Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis supported the implementation of the Policy and the Action Plan, inter alia through his successful efforts for dialogue with China and with Myanmar. The process of
preparing country-specific human rights strategies for the EU’s relations with 150 partner countries was also almost fully completed.

Adopted for ten areas, the **EU Guidelines on Human Rights** strive to enable the EU to act as efficiently as possible in highly important fields. Each of these Guidelines comprises a catalogue of measures for the EU’s permanent commitment towards third countries on individual human rights issues such as the death penalty; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, human rights dialogues with third countries; the protection of children in armed conflict; the protection and promotion of human rights defenders; on combating violence against women, and on international humanitarian law. In June, the External Relations Council adopted the Guidelines on the human rights of LGBT persons provided for in the EU Policy and the EU Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy and – in line with an Austrian proposal – on freedom of religion and belief. Work on the elaboration of Guidelines on freedom of expression online and offline, which is also strongly supported by Austria, has also started. Austria advocates the full implementation and further development of the guidelines. In the context of COHOM, Austria is an active member of the working parties on freedom of religion and belief, the rights of the child, on fighting violence against women and on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security.

The main responsibility for implementing concrete projects and programmes in the field of EU human rights policy lies with the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**. The work of EIDHR is managed by the Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, which is headed by the European Commission. Negotiations on the extension of EIDHR’s mandate for the period 2014–2020 were completed in December. A concrete contribution to strengthening democracy globally is being made by the **EU election monitoring missions**, which have been conducted since 2000. A total of 39 Austrians have participated as short- and long-term observers in the eleven missions to Jordan, Kenya, Pakistan, Paraguay, Mali, Guinea, Honduras, Madagascar, Nepal and Kosovo. Austria has thus been very successful with its candidates and ranks fourth compared with other EU Member States.

Within the EU, the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union** is binding when implementing EU law. Negotiations on the EU’s accession to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) that were opened in 2010 were finalised for the time being. The accession treaty is currently being examined by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) for conformity with EU law. The ECJ’s opinion should be available in 2014.

The Vienna-based **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)** provides advice to the European Commission, the Council, other organs of the Union and the Member States. Austria cooperates closely with the FRA. As required by the FRA’s Founding Regulation, an external evaluation was carried out five years after its creation. The study, prepared by
external advisors, made an overall positive assessment of the Agency and the FRA received positive comments with regard to fulfilment of expectations. The findings produced by this external evaluation, including the FRA Management Board’s recommendations resulting from it, were officially presented in summer. On 6 December, the EU Council on Justice and Home Affairs adopted Conclusions on the FRA in which it also decided to review the Agency’s mandate with a view to its possible extension. In cooperation with the Lithuanian EU Council Presidency, the FRA organised a fundamental rights conference in November dedicated to “Combating Hate Crime in the EU” in November. The recommendations made by this conference were included in the Council Conclusions (Justice and Home Affairs) on combating hate crimes in the EU that were also adopted on 6 December.

8.3.2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues

As outlined above, the EU uses special guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues with third countries that define various forms of dialogue, namely structured human rights dialogues, ad hoc dialogues, dialogues with groups of states and expert meetings with like-minded states in preparation for major human rights events. The EU holds human rights dialogues with more than 40 states and groups of states. The respective topics, problematic issues and opportunities for discussion addressed during these dialogues are defined individually on a case by case basis. Topics that feature frequently in these talks are minority rights, women’s rights, the death penalty, freedom of religion and conscience, democratisation, the rule of law, children’s rights and civil society development. The EU strives to actively involve civil society in these dialogues, for instance by organising joint preparatory meetings in the lead-up to the dialogues. The human rights dialogues are held on an alternating basis in the EU and in the respective partner country.

In 2013, EU human rights dialogues, consultations and subcommittee meetings were held with Armenia, the African Union, the candidate countries, China, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Colombia, Moldova, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, the Ukraine, the USA, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Vietnam. A human rights dialogue was also launched with South Africa and negotiations on the modalities of an EU human rights dialogue were opened with Myanmar.

The EU-China Human Rights Dialogue was held on 25 June, this time in Guiyang, China. Besides individual human rights cases, the EU inter alia addressed the treatment of human rights defenders and the house arrest imposed on them, the situation of the Tibetan and the Uigurian minority, restrictions in freedom of religion, and the re-education camps. Consultations between the EU and the Russian Federation were held in mid-May and at the end of November. The topics addressed included the approach vis-à-vis NGOs, international cooperation on human rights issues, restrictions to
freedom of assembly and freedom of religion due to restrictive regulation, the rule of law and discrimination cases especially with regard to LGBTI persons.

The **EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue** was established at the end of 2002 but came to a virtual standstill after its fourth round in June 2004. During Austria’s EU Presidency in 2006, efforts were undertaken to resume the dialogue but remained unsuccessful due to the alarming human rights situation in Iran. The human rights situation was also criticised in a resolution co-sponsored by **Austria** and adopted by the 68th UNGA. Austria regularly addressed the numerous human rights violations in talks with the Iranian government.

### 8.4. Human Rights in the Council of Europe

The **European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** and the activities of the **European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)** are – due to the binding nature of the ECtHR’s decisions – the most important pillars of the CoE’s human rights protection system. Protocol 14 to the ECHR, which entered into force in 2010, led to a significant reduction in the convention system’s workload. Thanks to the Court’s improved efficiency, the high number of pending cases and backlog of complaints of previous years was markedly reduced. Between 1 January 2012 and 30 November 2013, the number of pending cases was thus reduced by 32% from 151,600 to 102,750.

After the **Brighton Declaration** of 20 April 2012 had been adopted by the State Parties to the ECHR under the British Chairmanship of the CoE, the Additional Protocols No. 15 and No. 16 to the ECHR were opened for signature. Protocol 15 intends to enhance the effectiveness of the Court by introducing small amendments to the Convention, one of them (No. 15) is intended to enhance the effectiveness of the Court, while the other (No. 16) enables State Parties to request the Court to give an advisory opinion. The Declaration also envisages improvements regarding the execution of judgments of the Court at national level in order to substantially reduce those cases which are pending only because judgements on earlier cases of a similar nature have not yet or not fully been implemented by a state party. Austria signed Additional Protocol No. 15 on 25 June.

In 2013, the ECtHR dealt with a total of 27 cases pending against Austria; in 15 cases a judgment was delivered; in 10 cases the Court found a violation of the ECHR by Austria.

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the EU committed itself to acceding to the ECHR. The **EU’s accession to the Convention** guarantees that Union legislation is reviewed by the ECtHR for its compatibility with the Convention. In addition to the existing possibilities of applying to the ECtHR, it will create the possibility to file an individual application directly against the EU in areas of
Austrian Priorities in the Field of Human Rights

EU competence. The respective negotiations with the CoE were led on behalf of the Union by the European Commission within a special working group of the CoE Steering Committee for Human Rights (CDDH) and were finalised for the time being on 5 April.

In its 123rd Session held in Strasbourg on 16 May, the Committee of Ministers invited Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland (Norway) to submit a regular overview of developments in the field of human rights, democracy and rule of law in Europe and to present relevant options for action. A first comprehensive report of the Secretary General will be discussed on 6 May 2014 at the 124th Session of the Committee of Ministers in Vienna.

In the reporting year, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the CoE Nils Muižnieks visited inter alia Azerbaijan, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Spain and Turkey. His reports and statements on both country-specific and thematic developments contribute to raising awareness of human rights in the Member States.

Since 2001, Elisabeth Steiner has been active as Austrian judge at the ECtHR; Gerald Schöpfer is a member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI); on 9 October Julia Kozma was elected to serve for a second four-year term as a member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (CPT); Helmut Sax is a member and 2nd President of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA); Dieter Halwachs is member of the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages; Karin Lukas is a member of the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR).

8.5. Human Rights in the OSCE
See Chapter 4.2.4.

8.6. Austrian Priorities in the Field of Human Rights
8.6.1. Freedom of Religion and Protection of Religious Minorities

Against the background of the global rise in violence and discrimination against religious minorities, Austria has stepped up its commitment to promoting religious freedom and the protection of religious minorities at bilateral and international level.

Austria has made this topic a priority of its membership in the HRC and regularly addressed the difficult situation of religious minorities in the country debates and in the context of the Universal Periodic Review of countries. This approach is also in keeping with the increasing focus being placed by
the EU on this topic. The EU introduces one annual thematic resolution on freedom of religion or belief (FoRB) in both the UNGA and the HRC. Together with the resolutions introduced by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), the topic of freedom of religion is receiving a global coverage.

The resolution on the rights of minorities initiated by Austria and introduced in the 22nd Regular Session of the HRC stresses the importance of protecting religious minorities as a key element of minority protection. The topic also features prominently on the agenda of the 5th Global Forum of the Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) held in Vienna in February. At this annual meeting a call for a more action-oriented religious dialogue was made. This year, the 6th Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, initiated by Austria with a view to implementing the Declaration on Minority Rights, dealt with the topic of “Guaranteeing the rights of religious minorities”. It issued recommendations for the protection of and the prevention of violence against religious minorities. Austria supports close cooperation of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues and the Special Representative on Freedom of Religion or Belief on this issue.

Within the EU, Austria continued its efforts towards ensuring that the European External Action Service increasingly perceives freedom of religion or belief and the protection of religious minorities as a priority issue. The EU Guidelines on Freedom of Religion or Belief, which were elaborated based on an Austrian initiative, were adopted by the Council. This provides the EU with an effective tool for a coherent human rights policy in this area. The protection of religious minorities was also included in the EU’s early warning system.

Austria also supports initiatives aimed at the protection of religious minorities and freedom of religion or belief in the context of the OSCE and of the Council of Europe.

8.6.2. Human Rights of Children

The promotion and the protection of the rights of children are a priority of Austrian foreign policy. As was the case during its non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council 2009–2010, Austria again made the promotion of the rights of children and their protection against violence and exploitation a priority of its HRC membership 2011–2014.

Against the background of the ongoing elaboration of the post-2015 development goals and the key importance they attach to child mortality, Austria together with Ireland, supported the inclusion of this topic in the HRC’s agenda during the negotiations on the latter’s annual resolution on the rights of the child in March. The resolution requested the WHO to prepare a study on child mortality as a human rights problem that was submitted to the HRC in September. In conjunction with that, Austria, together with a cross-
Austrian Priorities in the Field of Human Rights

regional group of states, introduced a resolution on combating child mortality that was adopted by consensus at the HRC meeting in September. In this meeting, the OHCHR was invited to develop, together with the WHO, technical guidance on the application of a human rights based approach that enables the effective reduction in the death toll of more than 6 million babies and young children claimed annually by diseases that are in fact preventable and easily treatable. Public consultations on this topic will be held in spring 2014.

In the session held by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna in April, Austria together with Thailand successfully introduced a resolution on the elaboration of model strategies and practical measures to prevent and combat violence against children in criminal justice systems. This resolution builds on numerous initiatives Austria has launched over the past few years, including the resolutions on human rights in criminal justice and the administration of justice in the HRC and the UNGA as well as an international expert consultation on the prevention of and responses to violence against children within the juvenile justice systems, that was held in Vienna in January 2012. The inter-governmental working group focusing on the development of model strategies and practical measures will meet in Bangkok in February 2014.

In the HRC's September session, Austria again successfully introduced the traditional resolution on human rights in the administration of justice. This resolution’s traditional focus on criminal juvenile law that is in line with human rights standards was maintained. For the first time it was possible to extend the condemnation of the death penalty and life-long imprisonment for juveniles to include also those cases in which early release is not precluded. This goes beyond the provisions included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and reflects long-standing demands by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and civil society.

On two levels, the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) is also committed to supporting the rights of the child in a targeted manner. On the one hand, the ADC in all its activities – including political dialogue – takes special account of the needs and rights of children in the context of implementing the human rights approach. On the other hand, the ADC promotes projects and programmes that are specifically tailored to strengthening the rights of children and taking account of their needs (such as preventing violence against children in Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, Uganda and in Kosovo; early support and primary education of children and of children with disabilities in Ethiopia and South-East Europe, and family support programmes though NGO co-funding).

Projects of the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) aimed at strengthening children’s rights in Kosovo and fighting polio in Syria were funded by way of multilateral development cooperation.
8.6.3. Human Rights of Women

Improving the human rights situation of women is a long-standing central concern of Austrian foreign policy.

Austria was a member of the Executive Board of UN Women from January to December. During this one-year membership, it contributed actively to the Council’s three annual sessions in New York in January, June and September, which were inter alia dedicated to preparation and decision-taking on the Strategic Plan of UN Women for 2014–2017.

On 13 February, Austria presented its seventh and eighth country report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in Geneva and answered questions posed by the members of the Committee. The delegation led by the Legal Adviser of the FMEIA, Ambassador Helmut Tichy, was composed of high-level representatives from all ministries involved. The Committee’s final observations and recommendations have already been communicated to Austria and are being reviewed by the relevant ministries with respect to their implementation.

The fourth implementation report on the National Action Plan on Implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security was adopted by the Austrian Federal Government on 12 March. In the EU context, Austria participated in a meeting of the EU Task Force on UNSC Resolution 1325 and in preparatory meetings for the second report on the EU Indicators for a Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of UNSC Resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1820 (2008). It also participated in the EU Member States’ annual meeting on Resolution 1325 dealing with the topic of “Transitional justice and gender: reducing impunity” held in Brussels in June.

Austria contributed to the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (see Chapter 8.2.3) and to the open debates of the UNSC on the topic of women, peace and security and conflict-related sexual violence (see Chapter 6.3.1.3).

The resolution on human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), introduced by Austria at the 23rd Session of the HRC in June focused inter alia on the special problems of internally displaced women and girls, including in particular sexual and gender-based violence. At this session, Austria also organised a side event on women’s rights. In this context, special attention was paid to the achievements, challenges and perspectives in the field of women’s rights 20 years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. Austria also actively participated in the annual debate on human rights of women, which this year dealt with “violence against women”.

In the context of the Third Committee of the 68th session of the UNGA (see Chapter 8.2.2), Austria actively participated in the negotiations on a range of
resolutions on strengthening women’s rights. Together with Argentina and Thailand it organised a side event on “gender-related killings of women and girls”.

As a clear sign of support for the system-wide campaign by the UNSG on fighting violence against women, Austria continued its contributions to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence. Throughout the year, an Austrian Junior Professional Officer (JPO) was seconded to the office of the Executive Director in New York to support UN Women.

The candidacy of the Austrian judge Lilian Hofmeister for the elections to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) to be held in 2014, was actively supported by Austria.

On 14 November, Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Spindelegger deposited the Austrian instrument of ratification on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

Gender equality and empowerment of women as well as the protection of women’s rights are among the declared goals of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). Apart from taking special account of the needs and rights of women and men with respect to all activities (gender mainstreaming), specific projects and programmes aimed at strengthening the rights and the participation of women and girls were supported including the programme “Rechte fordern – Gleichstellung fördern” (calling for rights – promoting equality) operated by CARE Austria in North Uganda, Nepal and Ethiopia, as well as projects in South Caucasus, in South East Europe and in Africa. Awareness-raising and health education projects were (co-) funded in Kenya and Ethiopia with the aim of combating female genital mutilation.

In the context of multilateral cooperation, support was provided to a UN Women project aimed at implementing UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) in Kyrgyzstan and a regional programme on gender-responsive budgeting and planning in South East Europe and Moldova was extended by two years.

### 8.6.4. Freedom of the Media and Protection of Journalists

In view of the global rise in targeted attacks against journalists and the problem of widespread impunity, Austria made improving journalists’ safety and defending freedom of the press and the media a major concern of its HRC membership. Building on the resolution on the safety of journalists introduced by Austria and adopted with broad support from the international community at the 21st Regular Session of the HRC in 2012, Austria launched a number of activities in the HRC context in Geneva in 2013.

The objective pursued was to consolidate the broad supra-regional coalition of states and civil society for the safety of journalists and the implementation of measures towards promoting the protection of journalists as called
for in the resolution. In this spirit, Austria on 4 June, for instance, organised a side event on “National and International Efforts to Strengthen the Protection Framework” in the context of the 23rd Regular Session of the HRC. A representative of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression, a representative of UNESCO and of the NGO “Committee to Protect Journalists” contributed to the event. At the 24th Regular Session of the HRC, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights presented a report on good practices in the protection of journalists, the preparation of which was requested by the resolution on the protection of journalists adopted in September 2012. In this context, the HRC adopted a decision introduced by Austria and supported by more than 100 states, which provides for holding a discussion event on the protection of journalists at the 26th Regular Session in June 2014.

During the 24th Regular Session of the HRC, Austria furthermore coordinated the text of a Joint Statement on the Safety of Journalists, presented on 13 September by Austria together with a cross-regional group of 70 other states. The declaration condemns the high number of killings of journalists and the large-scale impunity in relation to such crimes. It underlines the calls made by the HRC resolution on the protection of journalists and reminds states of their obligation to protect journalists and to promote the exercise of their right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media. The OHCHR is invited to hold a panel discussion on the safety of journalists in the context of the 26th Regular Session of the HRC.

At the 22nd session of the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ), Austria, on behalf of also Brazil and Switzerland, delivered a joint statement on the protection of journalists and on fighting impunity.

Chaired by the USA, an open debate on the protection of journalists was held in the UNSC in July. Attacks against journalists were unambiguously condemned by all SC members, confirming that such attacks represent a clear violation of international humanitarian law. What is more, many states agreed that the prevailing impunity represented an essential obstacle in this context. In a national statement, Austria presented its initiative on this topic in the HRC and called upon the UNSC to take more systematic account of the protection of journalists in its work. Austria invited the UNSC to increasingly include information on the situation of journalists in its country specific reports and in its report on the protection of the civilian population.

Important steps towards improving the safety and security of journalists were also taken in the context of UNESCO. Following the adoption of the UN system-wide Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity in April 2012, UNESCO was able to win Pakistan, Nepal, Iraq and South Sudan as pilot countries for the implementation of the Action Plan. The UNESCO study on special risk situations faced by female journalists, funded by Austria, was prepared by the NGO International News Safety Institute and will be presented in March 2014.
Chaired by Austria, a thematic debate on the safety of journalists and human rights standards, building on the recommendations adopted at the CoE Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and Information Society in November was held on 12 December. The Rapporteur on Freedom of the Media of the CoE Parliamentary Assembly, the Commissioner for Human Rights of the CoE and a representative of the ECtHR and of a civil society organisation (Association of European Journalists) participated in the debate, which was for the first time streamed live on the internet from the CoE’s Ministers’ Deputies meeting.

Austria also contributed to the international discussion on the **impact of the internet on human rights** and the full applicability of human rights online. Following its adoption in March 2012, implementation of the **Council of Europe's Internet Governance Strategy 2012–2015** will be evaluated in the context in a conference to be held in Graz in spring 2014. Together with Brazil, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland and Hungary, Austria organised a high-level event in the HRC entitled “How to safeguard the right to privacy in the digital age?”. The discussion, which attracted a lot of attention, was attended by the High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay and the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Opinion and Expression Frank La Rue. Participants identified the effective implementation of applicable human rights standards in the digital age as the central challenge to be faced in this respect.

Austria furthermore participated in the third “Freedom Online” conference held in Tunis from 16 to 18 June. The **Coalition for Freedom Online**, an informal group of interested states, set up by the Netherlands in December 2011, that supports freedom of expression on the internet worldwide. The coalition currently has 22 members and was most recently joined by Germany and Finland.

### 8.6.5. Protection of Minorities

The protection of the rights of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities has traditionally been an Austrian priority issue within the UN. Austria regularly introduces thematic resolutions on this topic both in the HRC and in the UNGA.

Concrete recommendations from the Forum on Minority Issues were for the first time included in the resolutions initiated by Austria for the protection of minorities as instructions for action towards enhanced implementation of international commitments and obligations. The Austrian initiative regarding a resolution on “Effective Promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities” was adopted by consensus by the 3rd Committee of the UNGA on 19 November. The resolution was co-sponsored by 68 other states from all regions.
Austria supports the mandate of the Independent Expert on Minority Issues, which has been held by the Hungarian Rita Izsak since August 2011. Her priorities include the protection of religious minorities, recognition issues, minority protection in conflict prevention, women as members of minorities and minorities in the context of reaching the millennium development goals.

On Austria’s initiative, an annual Forum on Minority Issues was established in 2008. The forum is an important platform for reviewing the implementation of the UN Declaration on Minority Rights and involves a large number of government and NGO representatives. The 6th Forum on Minority Issues in November was dedicated to the protection of religious minorities.

At the 24th Session of the HRC in September, Austria supported a resolution aimed at ensuring the establishment of a special fund to support the participation of civil society representatives in the UN Forum on Minority Issues, the Forum for the Economy and Human Rights as well as in the Social Forum. Thus the ground has been prepared for the institutional strengthening and long-term safeguarding of these fora and acts as an important political signal highlighting the importance of including civil society representatives in the HRC fora.

In the EU context, major importance is attached to the protection and integration of Roma. This is also underlined by the review of the implementation of the National Roma Integration Strategies by 2020. In December, Austria submitted its second implementation report on its National Strategy to the EC. The preparation of this report falls within the scope of the National Contact Point at the Federal Chancellery, which inter alia also reviews the implementation of the national concepts for the inclusion of Roma in Austria. The Contact Point also organises regular meetings of the dialogue platform for Roma issues on the specific topics related to the inclusion of Roma.

Austria cooperates closely with the Council of Europe monitoring mechanisms. The recommendations made to Austria in 2012 by the two committees – the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the Committee of Experts of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages – serve as a blueprint for further strengthening the protection of minorities in Austria.

On 27 August, Astrid Thors from Norway was appointed 4th High Commissioner on National Minorities of the OSCE. This function was established as an early warning mechanism in case of ethnic tensions and celebrated its 20th anniversary.

### 8.6.6. Human Rights Education

As a member of the UNESCO Executive Committee, Austria defined human rights education as a priority and supports initiatives aimed at learning more about human rights and the mechanisms in place towards their protection.
Human rights education aims to share knowledge and information on human rights and on developing an understanding of the importance of respecting, protecting and actively implementing human rights in one’s own community. Based on comprehensive and informed understanding, awareness of human rights shall thus be sustainably strengthened and implemented in society.

As in previous years, Austria co-sponsored the resolution on a global human rights education programme, which was again adopted by consensus by all states in the HRC. By adopting this resolution, the HRC thus proclaimed the third phase of the UN World Programme for Human Rights Education. The latter was proclaimed by the UNGA in 2004 in order to promote human rights education in all sectors. While the first and the second phase of the programme focused on human rights education in primary and secondary education as well as on human rights education at universities and training programmes for public officials, especially for teachers and members of the military and law enforcement bodies, the third phase of the World Programme (2015–2019) will focus on human rights education and further training for media professionals and journalists.

In preparing the “Understanding Human Rights” manual on human rights education, Austria has provided an important tool that is used worldwide. The manual has already been translated into 15 languages and is used successfully by numerous countries and regions in training and education programmes. Last year the first Portuguese edition was published.

8.6.7. International Humanitarian Law

See Chapter 9.4.

8.6.8. Combating Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a particularly grave violation of the most fundamental human rights. According to estimates by the UN, several million people – mainly women and children – fall victim to human trafficking every year. According to UN estimates, profits of 32 billion US dollars are generated with the “human being as a commodity” every year. Alongside arms and drug trafficking, human trafficking is one of the largest and most lucrative fields of organised cross-border crime worldwide.

Austria’s geographical location at the centre of Europe means it is affected by human trafficking both as a transit and destination country. Experience has shown that human trafficking in Austria predominantly involves cases of sexual exploitation, exploitative employment relationships and child labour.

Austria is a party to all relevant international legal instruments on combating human trafficking, including the “Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and
Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime” (2005) and the “Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings” (2006). In this context, Austria has continued its intensive cooperation with international organisations, such as the Vienna-based UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). In May, Federal Minister Johanna Mikl-Leitner participated in a high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly on human trafficking.

On a national level, the relevant efforts are based on the National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking (2012–2014) and are coordinated by the Task Force on Human Trafficking set up in 2004 under the leadership of the FMEIA. The Task Force is chaired by the National Coordinator on Combating Human Trafficking, Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Director General of the Legal and Consular Section at the FMEIA. All public and government institutions, federal provinces and NGOs cooperate closely within the Task Force.

On 8 July, a meeting of federal province representatives was held in Graz in which topics that are of special interest for the federal provinces were dealt with. Social partner representatives were increasingly involved in the work of the Task Force, especially in the working group on “labour exploitation”.

In the field of prevention and/or awareness-raising, the FMEIA – on the occasion of the EU Anti-Trafficking Day 2013 – organised the annual public event on joining forces against human trafficking at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy on 21 October. The meeting focused on the topic of human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. The exhibition “Human Trafficking – Slavery of the 21st Century” designed under the leadership of the FMEIA was presented during this event at the Diplomatic Academy, during an event on political education organised by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and at the Open House event in the FMEIA.

All Austrian representations abroad, especially in high-risk countries, were encouraged to launch preventive measures against human trafficking, for instance, by distributing information brochures. Within the framework of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), Austria assisted potential victims of human trafficking locally in the countries of origin, for instance, through projects organised by IOM and UNODC in West Africa, South East Europe and Moldova.

In order to enhance the protection of domestic workers of diplomats accredited to Austria or of international officials, the FMEIA, in cooperation with the other relevant ministries and victim protection institutions, developed a wide range of control measures aimed at preventing potential abuse. Austria has assumed a leading role at international level in the protection of domestic workers.
8.7. The International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC), based in The Hague, is a permanent international court established by the Rome Statute (RS) of 1998. Its jurisdiction currently includes genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (under certain conditions also the crime of aggression as of 1 January 2017), provided that they were committed after the RS came into force on 1 July 2002, either on the territory of a State Party or by a national of a State Party. The UNSC may also refer a situation to the ICC, even if the states in question are not State Parties to the RS. The RS, to which 122 States are currently party (including the new State Party Côte d’Ivoire), stipulates that the ICC shall be based on the principle of complementarity. This means that the Court will only act if the affected states, which are primarily responsible for trying the perpetrators of the most serious crimes, are either unwilling or unable to carry out the investigation or prosecution.

Currently, eight situations are pending with the ICC: Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Darfur/Sudan (referral by UNSC resolution 1593 (2005)); Libya (referral by UNSC resolution 1970 (2011)); Côte d’Ivoire; and the latest situation is Mali (start of formal enquiries on 16 January). The ICC did not pass any sentences in 2013.

On 18 March, the Congolese militia leader Bosco Ntaganda, who had been wanted for war crimes and crimes against humanity, surrendered himself voluntarily and was transferred to the ICC. The hearing on the confirmation of charges against the former President of Côte d’Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo, was adjourned on 3 June and the Prosecutor requested to consider providing further evidence. On 30 September, Côte d’Ivoire challenged the admissibility of the case against Laurent Gbagbo’s wife Simone before the ICC and requested that her transfer be postponed. On the same day, the warrant of arrest for Charles Blé Goudé was unsealed.

The start of the trial for crimes against humanity after the election in Kenya 2007–2008 against Vice President William Ruto and President Uhuru Kenyatta was adjourned several times. The trial against Ruto was eventually opened on 10 September. On 25 October, the Appeals Chamber passed a judgement on the question of the indictees’ continuous presence at trial (see Article 63 RS), after Ruto’s counsel with reference to the latter’s official function had requested that Ruto be represented at trial by a representative and/or participate via video link. After two principal witnesses had withdrawn, the Prosecutor on 19 December requested that the start of the trial against President Kenyatta, scheduled for the beginning of February 2014, be again adjourned.

On 31 May, the ICC rejected Libya’s challenge to the admissibility of the case against Saif Al-Islam Gaddafi and reminded Libya of its obligation to surrender the subject to the Court. Gaddafi is nevertheless still being held in custody in Zintan (Libya). In the case against Abdullah Al-Senussi, however,
The ICC on 11 October decided that the case is inadmissible before the Court. This is the first time that the Court has granted a challenge to its admissibility. The criminal proceedings can now be conducted in Libya. The counsel for the defence, however, appealed against this decision.

Reacting to an increased number of offences against the administration of justice consisting in attempted influencing of witnesses, the Court on 2 October unsealed a warrant of arrest against the Kenyan journalist Walter Barasa. At the beginning of December, four individuals, including the main defence counsel of former Congolese presidential candidate Jean-Pierre Bemba, were arrested for presenting false or forged evidence and influencing witnesses to provide false testimony.

Since the beginning of 2012, Austria has, against the background of the human rights violations and assaults against the civil population in Syria, consistently called for holding perpetrators and their commanders accountable and that the situation in Syria be referred by the UNSC to the ICC. Together with 56 other states, Austria thus signed a letter, coordinated by Switzerland, which reiterates this call and was communicated to the UNSC on 14 January.

The 12th Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the RS, held in The Hague from 20 to 28 November, was impacted by the criticism of the ICC’s work voiced at the extraordinary AU summit on 11 and 12 October. At the request of the AU, a special segment on the topic of “Indictment of sitting Heads of State and Government and its consequences on peace and stability and reconciliation” was held. Austria actively participated in the deliberations and delivered a statement in the general debate. Plenary discussions were also held on the topics of cooperation and victims. On 27 November, the resolution on the ICC budget 2014, negotiated under Austrian chairmanship, was adopted by consensus. Following difficult negotiations with the African states led by Kenya, it was possible to reach agreement on several amendments to the ICC’s Rules of Procedure and Evidence. In line with these, the Court may grant a request by an accused to be present during part or parts of the trial through the use of video technology (Rule 134bis) or to be represented by counsel (Rule 134ter). In the case of an accused subject to a summons to appear, who is mandated to fulfil extraordinary public duties at the highest national level, the Court shall grant the request to be represented by counsel only provided that all requirements are fulfilled and alternative measures are inadequate (Rule 134quater). Amendments to Rule 68 and Rule 100 were also adopted.

Austria is among the traditional supporters of the ICC. It was, for instance, the first State Party to sign an agreement with the ICC on the enforcement of sentences and holds discussions on an arrangement on victim protection. Currently, a draft plus related explanations for an amendment of the Criminal Code that foresees the inclusion of crimes prosecuted under the RS is being finalised. The preparatory work on the ratification of the amendments
The International Criminal Court

to the RS (crime of aggression and addition of further war crimes), adopted in June 2010 by the RS Review Conference in Kampala (Uganda), has been completed. In spring, the amendments may thus be submitted as soon as possible to the Austrian National Council for approval.
9. **Humanitarian Affairs**

9.1. **Austrian Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief**

9.1.1. **Bilateral Humanitarian Aid**

Bilateral humanitarian aid provided by Austria is funded and overseen by the FMEIA and other federal ministries, including the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, the federal provinces and municipalities and other public institutions.

Bilateral humanitarian aid reacts to exceptional crisis situations mostly caused by natural disasters or provoked by armed conflict. The most evident consequences of such extreme crisis situations are refugee flows and famine. This continued to hold true for the **ongoing conflict in Syria**, which resulted in a further dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation of the Syrian civilian population with millions of internally displaced persons and refugees who fled to neighbouring countries. Some 4.2 million euros were made available from the **Foreign Disaster Relief Fund (FDRF)**, by the ADA and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management for the provision of basic services and food aid to internally displaced persons in Syria, for providing regional aid to refugees and for refugee projects carried out by Austrian non-governmental institutions in Armenia, Jordan and Lebanon. In addition to that, the Federal Ministry of the Interior also provided benefits in kind (see Chapter 9.1.1.1.). Another priority was managing the **severe drought in the Sahel region**, which further aggravated the crisis in Mali. Austria provided 1.45 million euros in funding from the FDRF, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and the ADA to mitigate the food crisis and the plight of refugees and internally displaced persons. Following the catastrophic **typhoon disaster in the Philippines**, 1.35 million euros were made available from the FDRF, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and the Province of Tyrol for the provision of basic services to the affected population. Further assistance amounting to 300,000 euros was provided to the programme aimed at **enhancing the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons**, which is coordinated by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

Total bilateral humanitarian aid, including humanitarian aid for international disasters coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior amounted to 12.19 million euros (preliminary figures). Funds and assistance provided were channelled through international humanitarian organisations and Austrian NGOs.

9.1.1.1. **International Disaster Relief**

Austria also provided international disaster relief in response to requests for assistance under the EU mechanism and in direct coordination with the EC/
Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC). In the aftermath of the **snow chaos in Hungary** in March, Austria provided bilateral assistance to the Hungarian civil protection authorities and made available six snow ploughs and subsequently also four additional snow blowers through ASFINAG (the Austrian motorway operator). In connection with the **flow of refugees from Syria to Bulgaria** triggered by the conflict in Syria, disaster relief was provided in October by the Federal Ministry of the Interior and logistics support given by the **Austrian Red Cross**. Woollen blankets, camp beds, folding mattresses and water canisters were thus made available to refugees in Bulgaria. Following the **tropical storm Haiyan** in November, an Austrian expert was seconded to the EU coordination team in the **Philippines**.

### 9.1.2. Multilateral Humanitarian Aid

**9.1.2.1. Austrian Food Aid**

The **Food Assistance Convention**, which entered into force on 1 January, replaced the International Food Aid Convention thus facilitating the transition from donor-oriented to more flexible, needs-based food aid. Austria ratified the convention at the end of January. The responsibility for its implementation lies with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Assistance was provided for victims of food crises and/or for projects aimed at strengthening food security in Syria, Mali, Somalia, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Georgia, and processed through the **UN World Food Programme (WFP)** and the **UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**. The beneficiary countries were selected in cooperation with the FMEIA and the ADA.

**9.1.2.2. International Committee of the Red Cross and International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**

The International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**) was active in more than 80 countries. Together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (**IFRC**) and the national organisations, it made an important contribution to alleviating humanitarian suffering. Austria supported the ICRC’s operational work for refugees and internally displaced persons in the Sahel region, especially in Mali. Austria also contributed to the ICRC’s headquarters budget. Funds were made available to the IFRC for the provision of initial care to the population affected by the typhoon disaster in the Philippines.

Federal President Heinz Fischer and State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka met the President of the ICRC, Peter Maurer, for working discussions in Geneva in June and in February respectively.

9.2.1. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for international coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency response, for the development of the UN’s humanitarian policies as well as for the advocacy of humanitarian issues with other UN departments. In addition to its headquarters in New York and Geneva, OCHA operates a network of field offices and regional support offices. Only 5 per cent of OCHA’s financial requirements are covered by the regular UN budget, the rest is made up of voluntary payments by member states including Austria. Since 2010, Austria has been a member of the OCHA Donor Support Group, a forum made up of top donors to OCHA.

Austria supported OCHA’s efforts through an untied contribution to the core budget. Austria furthermore contributed to the programme for enhancing the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons. Austria also provided financial assistance in the field of disaster prevention in the Caribbean. In October, OCHA representatives were in Vienna for a working visit.

9.2.2. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is one of the largest UN relief organisations operating on all continents. In June, Federal President Heinz Fischer met the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres for a working discussion in Geneva.

Austria supported UNHCR with an untied contribution to the core budget and by funding UNHCR activities for refugees and internally displaced persons from Syria. UNHCR is funded almost exclusively through voluntary contributions.

At the end of August, Austria declared its willingness to take in refugees from Syria; half of these 500 individuals will be taken in under a humanitarian admission programme agreed on with UNHCR.

9.2.3. United Nations World Food Programme

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the UN’s largest humanitarian organisation. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management provided assistance to the victims of the drought disasters in the Sahel region (Mali), in Somalia and for refugees and internally displaced persons in Syria.
9.2.4. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Middle East

As was the case in previous years, Austria made core payments to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). In addition, the ADA also provided financial assistance to the UNRWA health care programme in Palestine.

9.2.5. The United Nation’s Central Emergency Response Fund

The reformed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) was adopted by the UNGA in December 2005 and became operational in March 2006. In establishing the CERF, the UN implemented a key reform project in the humanitarian field. The CERF is a major improvement over the system of “flash appeals”, which were provided with funds by member states only after a disaster or crisis had struck. It is a standby fund which enables more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to be provided to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts (also see Chapter 6.2.9.). Austria made a core payment to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.

9.3. Humanitarian Aid in the European Union Context

Austria contributed its share to humanitarian aid worldwide through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) whose budget amounted to some 1.35 billion euros. The largest portion of funds was used to provide aid for the humanitarian crises in Syria, Sudan, Chad, at the Horn of Africa and in Central Africa.

9.4. International Humanitarian Law

The year was again dominated by the implementation of the outcomes of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent held in Geneva at the end of 2011.

The conference’s most important outcome was that the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was mandated with preparing options and recommendations on the treatment of persons detained in armed conflict and with preparing better mechanisms for enhanced compliance with international humanitarian law. Austria had supported these efforts at the conference.

In April and in December, informal experts’ meetings were held in Geneva on the priority issue of “strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law”, while a Meeting of States was held on this topic in June. Discussions focused on the introduction of regular Meetings of States as well
as periodical reporting on compliance with international humanitarian law. These topics will again be addressed at the follow-up meetings to be organised by Switzerland in cooperation with the ICRC in 2014.

On 25 February, the President of the ICRC, Peter Maurer (Switzerland) received State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka for a working discussion in Geneva. In the context of an official visit, Federal President Heinz Fischer met President Maurer for a working discussion in Geneva on 10 June.

After Kampala, Buenos Aires and Jakarta, Vienna was the fourth city to host an experts’ conference on the protection of civilians under international humanitarian law under the heading of “Reclaiming the Protection of Civilians under International Humanitarian Law”. Held from 21 to 22 February, this European regional workshop was opened jointly by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger and the Norwegian Foreign Affairs Minister Espen Barth Eide. Attendees included experts from the Council of Europe region, from international organisations and from numerous civil society organisations. A number of practical recommendations aimed at strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law were prepared by the conference. A global conference in Oslo marked the completion of the process for the time being. The recommendations prepared under this initiative will be taken account of and implemented especially in the context of the work of both the UN and the ICRC.

On 6 December, a seminar on the topic of drones was held in Graz in cooperation with the Austrian Red Cross and the universities of Graz and Linz. In several panels, experts discussed state-of-the-art of drone technology, civilian and military uses of drones and fields of application, questions relating to Austrian and international aviation law, the relationship between international humanitarian law and human rights in the context of the use of drones, export controls, and dealing with drones at UN level.

Issues related to International Humanitarian Law are regularly discussed within the Austrian National Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law chaired by the FMEIA and the Austrian Red Cross. In 2013, the main focus of these discussions was on the ongoing follow-up of the 31st International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, nuclear disarmament, the arms trade treaty, the ruling by the Austrian Administrative Court on the protection of the Red Cross emblem and aspects of international humanitarian law addressed by the HRC. 2013 also saw the launch of the National Commission’s own internet portal.
10. Multilateral Economic Policy

10.1. World Trade Organisation (WTO)

Some important initiatives were launched, setting the course for the immediate future of multilateral trade policy. Over the first five months, the dominating topic was the election of a new Director General. Out of eight shortlisted candidates, the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the WTO, Ambassador Roberto Carvalho de Azevêdo, was elected to the position.

The main focus of attention was on preparations for the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC9) in Bali (Indonesia) from 2 to 7 December, which was considered the “last opportunity for survival” of the Doha Round and/or the WTO’s negotiating capacity. The “obligation to succeed” thus increased the pressure on all delegations. After long and difficult negotiations several decisions were adopted, among which the agreement reached on the latest WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation is particularly noteworthy. It aims at eliminating barriers to trade, for instance by enhanced transparency in customs processing. The Agreement on Trade Facilitation is the first multilateral agreement adopted since the establishment of the WTO in 1995.

The “Bali Package“ also includes decisions on individual aspects of agriculture, development topics, and issues related to least developed countries (LDCs), such as the continuation of works regarding preferential rules of origin or WTO exceptions for services or service suppliers in the context of the LDCs work programme.

Food security proved a particularly controversial issue. Eventually a decision was reached on allowing special facilitations to public stockholding of traditional staple food crops in developing countries. An exemption to the WTO rules is thus granted for a limited period of four years, rendering government-supported purchasing and warehousing of staple food possible in developing countries. This solution was welcomed by the EU, but supplemented with rules against abuse and for enhanced transparency. A permanent solution in the field of food security could be adopted in four years at the ministerial conference after next.

With respect to export competition in agriculture, the objective of eliminating all forms of export subsidies was highlighted.

Although the EU contributed to these negotiations, it did not assume a very prominent role in the talks, which enabled it to act as a mediator throughout the process. Represented by Michael Froman as the new Trade Representative, the USA played a very constructive role in the negotiations. Likewise, large emerging countries such as China, but also Brazil and last but not least India too demonstrated their sense of responsibility, thus ensuring collective success.

It was possible to safeguard Austria’s interests concerning transit/road freight transport, as the respective status quo remained unchanged.
The EU’s Common Agricultural Policy is not affected by the decisions taken at the WTO conference in Bali.

Three new members joined the WTO. Laos and Tajikistan joined in spring and the decision on Yemen’s accession was adopted at the MC9, raising the organisation’s membership to 160 states. Kazakhstan, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Afghanistan and the Seychelles are considered likely to obtain WTO membership in 2014.

In July, the Fourth Aid for Trade Global Review was held. This biennial event is intended to drive the Aid for Trade Initiative, which serves as a platform for trade-related development assistance.

10.2. Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

10.2.1. Developments and General Trends

Discussions at the annual Ministerial Council meeting in May focused on “It’s all about People: Jobs, Equality and Growth”. Despite signs of recovery, major challenges are still to be met in order to promote employment and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in view of the current economic situation. To this end, structural reform has to be continued. Special attention was paid to youth employment and a Youth Action Plan was presented in June.

The issue of trust and confidence also played a major role at the Ministerial Council meeting. The past few years of crisis were accompanied by growing disenchantment with politics and declining trust in markets and the word of finance. This development needs to be countered by powerful measures in the field of financial regulation, the fight against corruption and transparent decision-making procedures.

The cross-sectoral policy and analysis approach has been consolidated and was confirmed as an adequate means for elaborating interactive and interdisciplinary solutions. The horizontal projects NAEC (New Approaches to Economic Challenges), GVC (Global Value Chain), TiVA (Trade in Value Added) and BEPS (Base Erosion and Profit Shifting) are of particular relevance in this respect.

State Secretary Andreas Schieder represented Austria at the Ministerial Council. Austria’s contribution focused on fighting youth unemployment and underlined the importance of the OECD’s work on tax avoidance and tax evasion.

10.2.2. Economic and Financial Policy

The Economic Survey of Austria, which put special emphasis on the multi-dimensional topic of well-being, was published in 2013. The report is an example of the OECD’s strategy to analyse – alongside economic growth and
employment – other topics that are also relevant for a country’s development. The central recommendations given to Austria based on the Survey 2013 relate to fiscal and financial policy, public governance and policy formation, ageing, work/family obligations and the integration of migrant groups as well as environmental sustainability.

With respect to financial markets, the OECD Secretariat focused in principle on two recommendations aimed at increasing stability: the introduction of a fixed equity ratio in relation to the (non-weighted) assets and the separation of classical, commercial banking from investment banking.

10.2.3. International Tax Policy

In the tax field, BEPS (Base Erosion Profit Sharing) has been and still is the most prominent and labour-intensive OECD project, aiming at the prevention of tax avoidance by multi-national groups. The project focuses inter alia on reviewing tax regimes that are used to withdraw the tax basis from other countries as well as artificial profit shifts for mobile income such as interests, dividends and licenses. The adoption of the 15-points Action Plan, which contains the global obligation to prepare effective and internationally applicable measures against BEPS by 2015, at the G20 Ministers of Finance meeting in Moscow in July was a milestone decision in this respect. As early as in autumn 2014, the OECD is to present some initial proposals.

Not least due to the pressure from the G20, twelve other states – including Austria – joined the Multilateral Convention on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters that had been amended in 2010.

Another main activity has been the development of a uniform global standard for the Automatic Exchange of Information (AEI) on financial account data. At the G20 Ministers of Finance meeting in April, the AEI was defined as the future global standard, while the OECD (and its G20 partner) was tasked with its preparation. The relevant technical specifications are to be defined by mid-2014.

The ratings for the 50 countries reviewed for their transparency provisions were presented at the 6th Annual Meeting of the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes in November. While four jurisdictions (Luxembourg, Cyprus, British Virgin Islands and the Seychelles) were rated as non-compliant with international requirements, Austria and Turkey were only considered as partially compliant. Austria stated that it would adapt its legislation without further delay in order to improve its rating as soon as possible.

10.2.4. Trade and Investment

At the January OECD Ministerial Council meeting, work on a value-added-based measurement of trade flows (Trade in Value Added) was presented,
which is meant to contribute inter alia to a better analysis of the increasingly important global value added chains.

The OECD will also continue work on export restrictions for raw materials and on competition neutrality and public companies in international markets.

Directly related to the multi-lateral WTO negotiations provisionally concluded in Bali in December, the OECD analyses on trade facilitation and on regional trade agreements (RTAs) identify significant potential by reducing trade barriers, especially as regards an increase in trade and growth in developing countries where the relevant costs are comparably low.

10.2.5. Education and Skills

Work in the field of education and skills constitutes one of the core elements of OECD activity. Its surveys shed light on the best financing of the education system, the demand for training and degrees and the impact of education and education policy on the various sectors of society. In 2013 the OECD presented the results of the PISA study, and for the first time also of the PIAAC (Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies) survey.

10.2.6. Social Affairs, Migration, Consumer Protection

Discussions were dominated by massive unemployment problems faced by a number of OECD countries and a widening wage gap, characterised by macro-economic instabilities. A special focus was placed on the aspects of long term and youth unemployment.

The OECD holds the view that the efforts towards structural reform of social systems, launched during the crisis, are to be continued. After a three-year decline, the international Migration Outlook 2013 identified an upward trend in migration movements, mainly in the EU.

In the field of equal opportunities, the recommendation of 1980 was revised and subsequently adopted by the Ministerial Council as part of the gender initiative.

10.2.7. Corporate Social Responsibility

Austria attaches much importance to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, which are to be considered part of the global efforts towards promoting corporate social responsibility.

When becoming aware of infringements, such as violations of human rights or environmental standards, corruption, tax avoidance, or violations of con-
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

Consumer protection standards, individual complaints can be filed with National Contact Points. The FMEIA is represented on the steering committee of the Austrian National Contact Point, which is led by the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth.

In the context of the implementation of the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, the Investment Committee’s new working group “Working Party on Responsible Business Conduct (RBC)” commenced its activities in March. With more than 500 participants, including ministerial-level representatives, the first “Global Forum on RBC” in June was a successful event and will again be held in 2014. Austria supports a project aimed at raising awareness of the OECD Guidelines and corporate social responsibility in the Central Asia and Caucasus region (with a particular focus on Kazakhstan and Georgia).

The FMEIA, furthermore, forwarded the Guidelines to all Austrian representations abroad requesting the latter to disseminate them in their respective jurisdictions. CSR principles are also reflected in a number of international documents, including in particular in the UN Global Compact, the London G20 Summit Declaration of 2009 as well as the G20 Anti-Corruption Action Plan, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights of 2011, the Communication by the EC on CSR of the same year and the International Standard ISO 26000.

10.2.8. Environment and Agriculture

The OECD Environmental Performance Review of Austria was published on 6 November. In most aspects the review yielded positive results. Austria’s drinking water quality is among the best worldwide and the share of renewables in energy supply and electricity generation is three times as high as the OECD average. The most important challenges include the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and nitrogen oxides, the improvement of air quality, the loss of green areas because of construction activities and a social-ecological tax reform.

The OECD also started work on Long-term Scenarios for Agriculture and Food.

10.2.9. Global Relations

An intensive debate on the OECD’s global reach has been ongoing for the last few years. Its underlying goal is to share the OECD’s fundamental values, recommendations and practices with other regions. Along with ongoing intensified cooperation with Brazil, India, Indonesia, China and South Africa, the debate has increasingly focused on the whole of Asia, Latin America and Africa. Against the background of Asia’s growing economic importance, the
Ministerial Council initiated the development of a South-East Asia regional programme for the promotion of regional cooperation.

The Ministerial Council likewise gave the green light to opening concrete membership negotiations with Colombia and Latvia, and also decided to start accession talks with Costa Rica and Lithuania. The membership negotiations with Russia, which have been ongoing for years, were continued.

As another tool for cooperating with non-member countries, the Ministerial Council also adopted a framework for country programmes.

10.2.10. Statistics/Measuring Well-Being

The OECD constantly provides current data and timelines on the most diverse areas and strives to support the identification of solutions to new political challenges, for instance based on data on global value added chains given as additional information to the traditional export and import data (Trade in Value Added, published for the first time in January).

10.3. International Energy Agency (IEA)

Chaired by Turkey, the IEA Ministerial meeting was held from 19 to 20 November, bringing together representatives from 37 states and some 30 high-level company representatives. Austria was represented by senior public officials.

At the meeting, the IEA together with six partner states (China, India, Russia, Indonesia, South Africa and Brazil) adopted a declaration of intent on future cooperation in the form of association. This Joint Declaration on Association marks an important step in the IEA’s efforts to put its relations with emerging countries on an institutionalised basis.

Estonia’s accession process was also completed, and the country will join the IEA in 2014 as the 29th Member State.

The IEA Member States furthermore adopted a declaration on climate change, which focuses on four concrete measures, i.e. increasing energy efficiency, investment in more efficient coal-fired power plants, reducing methane emissions from oil and gas production and reducing subsidies for fossil sources of energy.

10.4. International Financial Institutions

10.4.1. International Monetary Fund (IMF)

The IMF is mandated with supporting the functioning of global economic development by, on the one hand, laying the groundwork for sustainable eco-
conomic development based on stable monetary framework conditions, and on the other hand, assisting countries that face temporary balance of payments problems in stabilising their economy.

An important aspect of the IMF’s work is crisis prevention by monitoring its Member States’ national economies under the Article IV Consultations. In line with the relevant provisions stipulated under Art. IV of the IMF Articles Agreement, annual bilateral consultation talks are to be held between the IMF and its Member States on the latter’s economic situation.

In the country review prepared in the context of its 2013 Article IV Consultations with Austria, the IMF stated that although only slight economic recovery was registered in 2013, Austria still distinguished itself from others through stable economic development and its anchor function in the Eurozone. The IMF, however, identified problems with respect to full implementation of the medium-term fiscal adjustment plan. In the review Austria was furthermore called upon to take into account the expected costs for bank restructuring in its budget plan. At structural policy level, attention was drawn to the need for action in the fields of pensions, healthcare and state aid. In particular, the IMF stressed that the family benefits system should be simplified and incentives for higher levels of female employment should be created. The IMF also reminded Austria of the necessary reforms in the field of federalism (for instance, more comprehensive tax authority for the federal provinces). As regards the taxation system, the review criticised the high tax burden on labour.

The IMF pays special attention to the banking sector, where it has identified risks in relation to some Austrian banks’ East and South East European exposure. In order to reduce the future burden on the budget attributable to the banking sector, the IMF calls for the adoption of politically effective tools that allow for timely intervention in the event of banking crises.

10.4.2. Multilateral Development Banks

The activities of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) were characterised by international efforts towards forging ahead with the global fight against poverty in order to reach the UN Millennium Development goals (MDGs) – as striven for – in 2015. These efforts were, however, impeded by the ramifications of the financial and economic crisis and increasing challenges related to global climate change. The ongoing far-reaching political changes in North Africa also posed new challenges for MDBs.

During the financial and economic crisis of 2008–2009, the MDBs had already played an important anti-cyclical role in fighting the crisis and quickly increased their loan volumes significantly. For this reason, capital increases (of between 50% and 200%) were approved in 2010 by their shareholders, i.e. the international community of states, with Austria also participating.
Payment of these capital increases was further implemented through the disbursement of the respective instalments (tranches). In terms of both fighting the crisis and reaching the Millennium Development Goals, the MDBs “soft” (i.e. concessional) funds for the poorest development countries play an especially important role, as they make available favourable long-term funding with significant grant elements to these countries. Negotiations on the replenishment of the African Development Fund (ADF XIII) and of the International Development Association (IDA 17) as well as on the concessional fund of the World Bank Group were completed. Subsequently, these replenishments will be legally implemented through the IFI (International Financial Institutions) Contributions Act 2014. In line with the principle of international burden sharing, Austria thus pays contributions that are commensurate with its relative economic output.

For historical, foreign policy and foreign trade related reasons the economic and social development of South East Europe is of special concern to Austria and a goal the Austrian representatives in the MDBs have again consistently advocated in 2013. In both the respective voting rights groups and governing bodies, Austria thus pressed for the World Bank Group and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to continue to play an active and significant role in this region which was particularly hit by the repercussions of the economic and financial crisis. Austria furthermore co-funded a wide range of technical assistance (TA) programmes in this region, such as the continuation and/or the further development of the Investment Climate Reform Programme and the Financial Sector Advisory Programme launched by the World Bank. Both of these programmes are implemented in South and Eastern Europe by offices based in Vienna. Austria also supported the establishment of the World Bank Office of the Country Director for South-east Europe that became operational in Vienna on 1 September.

Reacting to the political changes in North Africa and the urgently needed boost to employment-intensive growth in this region, the EBRD adopted the expansion of its operational range to the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean in May 2011. This required an amendment to the bank’s statutes and bylaws that had to be ratified by all Member States. After Egypt and Morocco, which are founding members of the EBRD, Tunisia and Jordan became new members in 2011. All four countries requested “countries of operation” status. As a prerequisite, they have to fulfil the conditions regarding democracy, pluralism and market orientation provided for under Art. 1 of the Agreement establishing the EBRD. Fulfilment of these conditions is monitored on an ongoing basis. Following an in-depth review, the bank granted Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia recipient status on 1 November giving them unlimited access to funding from the bank’s ordinary capital resources. In Egypt, the start of operations was postponed for the time being because of political unrest.

A number of measures towards modernisation and reform of MDBs were launched and/or continued. They relate especially to the banks’ strategic
orientation, the reform of their governance structures, measures aimed at strengthening these institutions’ financial power, the revision and updating of their underlying business models as well as a stronger focus on results and/or performance. A particularly profound reform process is currently being driven forward by the World Bank. Under its new strategy, it has set itself the goal of reducing the number of absolutely poor to 3% of the global population by 2030 and to promoting specifically the bottom 40% of the income pyramid in the developing countries by promoting inclusive and sustainable growth (“shared prosperity”).
11. Global Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery

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

11.1.1. Initiatives for the Worldwide Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear disarmament and prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons and eventually a world without weapons of mass destruction are a priority of Austria's foreign and security policy. Austria holds the view that the proliferation of nuclear weapons can only be prevented by banning and renouncing such weapons in general. Austria pursues this goal by launching ambitious multilateral initiatives such as the working group on multilateral nuclear disarmament, which was initiated together with Mexico and Norway by way of a UNGA resolution and started work in Geneva in 2013. With a view to adding greater momentum to nuclear disarmament, Austria together with other states and civil society representatives therefore calls for focusing also on the global, humanitarian, health-related, environmental and economic impact of a potential use of nuclear arms as well as on aspects of international humanitarian law in the context of the international debate. Since 2012, Austria has thus co-initiated a number of joint statements on considering these impacts. At the UNGA disarmament committee meeting in October 125 states embraced such a statement. The humanitarian approach was also at the core of an international conference in Norway that attracted much attention.

In June, Austria organised a seminar for EU disarmament directors in order to strengthen coherence and cooperation within the EU in this field of Common Foreign and Security Policy.

11.1.2. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Since it entered into force in 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has formed the legal basis of the international nuclear regime whilst serving as one of the cornerstones of nuclear non-proliferation. The treaty obligates its 189 states parties – with the exception of the five recognised nuclear weapons states China, France, the UK, Russia and the USA – to renounce nuclear weapons and at the same time provides for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The five nuclear weapons states, for their part, commit themselves to nuclear disarmament and the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons. India, Israel and Pakistan are the only states not to have joined the NPT, while the Democratic People's Republic of North
Korea unilaterally declared its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003. The state parties meet every five years for a review conference in order to evaluate the state of implementation of the NPT.

Following the adoption of an action plan at the 2010 Review Conference, the focus is now being placed on its implementation. Due to lack of agreement among the states involved, the expectations regarding the organisation of the planned Helsinki Conference on the sensitive topic of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East have not yet been met. Slow progress made by nuclear weapons states in putting disarmament commitments into practice and lack of observation of non-proliferation obligations also represent major challenges for the NPT. Chaired by Romania, the second Preparatory Committee Meeting of the Review Cycle was held in Geneva in April and May. In its contributions, Austria inter alia highlighted the importance of disarmament and the humanitarian dimension nuclear weapons.

11.1.3. 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 its draft by the UNGA in 1996, the CTBT has been signed by 183 states and ratified by 161 (as of 16 January 2014). Thanks to its international monitoring system the CTBT will, following its entry into force, make the secret development of deployable nuclear weapons impossible. However, as not all of the key States listed in Annex 2 (Egypt, China, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea, Pakistan and the USA) have ratified it to date, the CTBT has as yet not entered into force. The CTBT Preparatory Commission has in the meantime made great progress in setting up the verification system whose worldwide network of monitoring stations is 85% complete and largely operational. The monitoring system consists of high-tech facilities for seismic, hydro-acoustics, ultrasonic and radionuclide measurements. It is already in use today for civilian applications, such as Tsunami early warning services and radiological measurements following the nuclear power plant disaster in Fukushima (Japan). The capabilities of the international monitoring stations were repeatedly demonstrated on the occasion of the nuclear weapons tests performed by North Korea, most recently during the test of 12 February.

11.1.4. Geneva Conference on Disarmament

Set up in 1979, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the multilateral forum established by the UN for negotiating disarmament agreements and treaties. Austria has been a member of the CD since 1996. Again in 2013, the 65 Member States did, however, not succeed in overcoming the serious political and content-related differences of opinion on disarmament issues.
and the resulting blockade of substantial negotiations that has been ongoing for 17 years now.

11.1.5. Chemical Weapons Convention

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997, introduced a ban on all chemical weapons and stipulates their phased destruction. With 190 states parties, the Convention has now come close to reaching its stipulated objective of having universal validity. In April, the Third Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention met in The Hague. The head of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), based in The Hague, Director General Ahmet Üzümcü (Turkey), was confirmed for a second term in office at the 18th Session of the Conference of the States Parties (The Hague, 2 to 6 December). On 10 December, the OPCW was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian civil war on 21 August faced the CWC with its biggest challenge to date. By adopting resolution 2118 of 27 September, the UNSC required Syria to fully destroy its chemical weapons arsenal by 30 June 2014. By the end of the year Syria thus became a member of the CWC, a joint UN-OPCW mission was set up to monitor the country’s chemical disarmament, the facilities for the production of chemical weapons and part of the chemical weapons were destroyed, and a precise plan for shipping the major part of the stockpile out of the country and destroying it was adopted. At the end of the year, agreements were reached according to which Austria will make available air transport capacities to support the mission in Syria and second one expert to the OPCW.

11.1.6. Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

Signed in 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. Currently, 170 countries are states parties to the BWC, while 10 are signatories (as of 16 January 2014). In the annual Experts Meetings and Meetings of States Parties, deliberations focus on measures towards enhancing biosafety, monitoring, training and exchange of experience. At the last Meeting of States Parties, held in Geneva in December, the topics were defined for the programme to be dealt with by the next Review Conference in 2016. In contrast to the Chemical Arms Convention, the BTWC is not equipped with a verification system. Negotiations towards setting up such a system failed in 2001 and have not been resumed since.

11.1.7. Ballistic Missiles

Along the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) is the only instrument dealing with the non-proliferation of
Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Conventional Weapons

ballistic missiles. Chaired by Japan, the HCoC convened for its 12th Regular Meeting of Subscribing States in Vienna from 30 to 31 May. Since 2002, Austria has held the function of Central Contact Point (Executive Secretariat), thus acting as interface for the entire exchange of information in the context of the HCoC mechanism. There are currently 136 signatories to The Hague Code of Conduct (as of 16 January 2014) and it is substantially supported by the EU.

11.2. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Conventional Weapons

Protection of civilians in armed conflict remains a long-standing thematic priority of Austrian foreign policy. The committed course Austria has pursued for many years now in fighting anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions is a very important humanitarian contribution in this respect, as these weapons indeed pose an acute risk to civilians and claim innumerable lives even decades after fighting has stopped.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) entered into force in 1999. Currently, 161 countries are states parties to the convention (as of 16 January 2014). As one of the leading states in the Ottawa Process, Austria is strongly committed to promoting the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction. In this spirit, Austria continued to make an active contribution towards the international process for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention. Austria was able to continue to provide financial support towards the clearance of areas infested by anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions as well as towards the support and rehabilitation of victims. In total, some 900,000 euros were made available in 2012/23 for projects in Afghanistan, Albania, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Lebanon and Libya.

The Ottawa Convention’s success is reflected in the fact that thirteen years after its entry into force, both use and production of anti-personnel mines have clearly declined while trade has virtually been brought to a halt. Major stockpiles have been destroyed and large contaminated areas have been cleared of mines. According to recent figures, the number of new victims reported in 2012 was the lowest since the beginning of the survey (2012: 3,628 registered cases compared with 11,700 in 2002).

As stipulated by the Cartagena Action Plan adopted in 2009, assistance to mine victims remains one of the Convention’s top priorities. A major challenge in this context is the economic and social reintegration of victims and their families. As Co-Chair of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, Austria also continued its special commitment to victim support at the 13th Conference of the State Parties in Geneva (2 to 6 December).
The Convention on Cluster Munitions (Oslo Convention) entered into force in 2010. As of 16 January 2014, a total of 84 states out of 113 signatories had ratified the Oslo Convention. The Convention on Cluster Munitions is the most important disarmament treaty since the Ottawa Convention of 1997 and makes an essential contribution to the further development of international law. It provides for a categorical prohibition of the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions, which cause unacceptable harm and suffering to civilians. In the field of assistance to survivors, the convention – not least due to Austria’s committed efforts – sets forward-looking standards. With the active participation of civil society representatives, the Fourth Conference of the States Party to the Oslo Convention was held in Lusaka (Zambia) from 9 to 13 September.

In September, the UNSC held a high-level debate on small arms and light weapons and for the first time adopted a resolution (2117) on this specific issue. The resolution focuses on preventing the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, observing the Council-mandated arms embargoes, eliminating the supply of weapons to terrorists and facilitating women’s participation in relevant policy-making. It furthermore demands that all parties to armed conflict comply strictly with their obligations under humanitarian and human rights law and urges states to join all relevant instruments, such as the Arms Trade Treaty. In view of the threat to peace and stability in the world in general and to civilians in armed conflict in particular, which arises from the uncontrolled accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons, the adoption of the resolution by the UNSC marked an important step towards resolving this problem.

In his report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, presented on 22 November, the UNSG drew attention once again to the grave humanitarian impact of the use of explosive devices in densely populated areas. As on previous occasions, states were again urged to put an end to this practice.

11.2.1. Latest Developments in Arms Technology

The Meeting of High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (held in Geneva on 14 and 15 November) agreed on the mandate to convene a meeting of government experts on the topic of lethal autonomous weapons in 2014.

The Special Rapporteur of the UN on the Promotion and the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism Ben Emmerson, and the Special Rapporteur of the UN on Extra-judicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions Christof Heyns, presented reports on the use of combat drones. The topic was discussed in detail at a seminar organised jointly by the FMEIA, the Austrian Red Cross and the Universities of Graz and Linz in Graz on 6 December.
11.3. Export Control Regime

11.3.1. Multilateral Export Control

The objective of the current five control regimes is to prevent – through the coordination of national export controls – sensitive technology and know-how from falling into the hands of states that could use them for military purposes. The main instruments under these regimes are lists of relevant goods and 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 largely covered by the Foreign Trade Act (as amended in 2011, previously the Foreign Trade Act of 2005).

The relevant regimes in the nuclear context are the Vienna-based Zangger Committee (ZC) which comprises 39 members and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) whose membership is – following the accession of Mexico and Serbia – currently made up of 48 participating governments. The ZC and the NSG draw up and maintain control lists of sensitive nuclear goods and equipment, seeking to prevent uranium enrichment and plutonium processing activities for non-peaceful purposes. At the NSG plenary session in Prague on 13 and 14 June members inter alia reached a final agreement on amending the control lists.

The Australia Group (AG), which currently comprises 42 members, endeavours to ensure, by means of export controls, that certain products will not contribute to the development of chemical and biological weapons. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) currently has 34 members (partners) who have committed themselves to adhering to guidelines governing the controlled proliferation of nuclear-weapons-capable rocket and missile technology (missiles with guidance systems and cruise missiles).

Founded in 1997, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), which comprises 41 participating states, aims to prevent destabilising accumulations of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies by coordinating national export controls and enhancing transparency and accountability. The Vienna-based Secretariat is headed by Ambassador Philip Griffiths (New Zealand). Vienna was also the venue of the annual meeting of participating states from 3 to 4 December.

11.3.2. Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)

The text of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) which defines rules for international trade in conventional weapons was adopted by the UNGA by an overwhelming majority on 2 April. Austria, which supported a robust ATT, was among the first states to sign the treaty on 3 June at a ceremony in New York. The treaty will enter into force as soon as the 50th ratification instrument has
been deposited. So far, the ATT has been signed by 116 states of which 9 have ratified it (as of 20 January 2014).

The ATT for the first time defines international standards for the transfer of conventional arms thus contributing to fighting and/or limiting the negative impact of illicit and irresponsible arms trade on stability, security and human rights as well as on sustainable economic and development policy. Arms exports are, for instance, banned if they could be used to commit serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights; and in decisions on the export of arms, criteria such as their impact on peace and security, the risk of illicit transfer and trafficking (including exchange of information on corruption) or gender-specific violence are to be taken into account. The ATT does not, however, contain a ban on weapons or an obligation to destroy existing weapons. The right to individual or collective self-defence as defined under Art. 51 of the UN Charter remains untouched by the treaty.

Together with its partners in the EU, Austria strongly supported the elaboration of the ATT in the UN context, thus continuing its long-standing and pro-active commitment towards promoting disarmament, arms control and strengthening international humanitarian law. Austria successfully advocated ensuring that the international Arms Trade Treaty lives up to the highest possible standards. This includes inter alia the development of mandatory human rights criteria in approval procedures, comprehensive scope as well as efficient enforcement mechanisms.

11.3.3. National Export Control

In Austria, exports of conventional arms are governed by the Foreign Trade Act (as amended in 2011, previously the Foreign Trade Act of 2005) and the War Material Act. Defence equipment subject to approval is defined in the Foreign Trade Act of 2011 and/or by the items listed in the EU Common Military List, the Second Foreign Trade Regulation of 2011 in conjunction with its Annex, and by the War Material Regulation, respectively.

Austria is also committed to adhering to the Common Position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment, adopted by the EU Council in December 2008. This legally binding Common EU Position contributes substantially to further harmonising national export regimes and implementation activities.
12. Austrian Development Cooperation

12.1. Introduction

Combating poverty in developing countries, securing peace and human security as well as preserving the environment and protecting natural resources are the key objectives of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) and are as such enshrined in the Federal Development Cooperation Act (DCA). The basic principles applied by ADC are the partner countries’ right to choose their own development agenda, consideration for cultural and social conditions, equality between women and men as well as respecting the needs of children and people with disabilities.

Relevant activities in the field of development cooperation are coordinated by the FMEIA, which also holds responsibility for the strategic orientation of ADC. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) implements bilateral programmes and projects in the partner countries.

As a member of the EU, the OECD, the UN and the World Bank Group, Austria contributes proactively to shaping international development policy within the relevant bodies.

12.1.1. Thematic Priorities

Cross-thematic ADC working groups focused on better cooperation with a view to assuring quality by formulating common principles for cross-cutting themes and the practical implementation of the nexus approach (interaction between water, energy, environment and food security) enshrined in the Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy 2013–2015.

With respect to sustainable rural development, the focus was placed on the problems of and the potential for integrating small-scale farmers in the agricultural value added chain. This topic was dealt with inter alia at a workshop involving representatives of academia and practical development cooperation held in Vienna. The analysis of inclusive approaches, the necessary framework conditions, resources and capacities is also an integral element of a research project conducted in cooperation with the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences.

ADC supports national decentralisation processes in the partner countries through complementary intervention at decentralised level. The role played by local authorities and good governance at local level in guaranteeing demand-oriented and efficient public services as well as sustainable development featured prominently on the agenda of the annual meeting of the international donors’ working group on “Decentralization and Local Governance”.

The systematic integration of the human rights-based approach in DC was of prime importance in terms of transposing and implementing the EU require-
ments and the Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy. In this connection an event dealing with good practice examples from Macedonia was organised in collaboration with Denmark’s development cooperation (DANIDA) and the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights. ADC moreover contributed to the World Conference on Human Rights “Vienna+20” and the inter-ministerial Task Force on Combating Human Trafficking and also completed a manual on implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the field of DC. The recommendations based on the two state reviews of Austria under the UN’s International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which were conducted in Geneva in 2013, marked an important milestone for the future orientation of human rights work in DC.

In the field of security and development, a cooperation agreement was signed supporting the Gender, Peace & Security Programme of the African Union (AU). In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, capabilities development is promoted in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and its Standby Force, a regional task force for peace missions with a special focus on the civilian component of crisis management. ADC also contributed pro-actively to the 5th Report on the Implementation of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) of the UNSC on Women, Peace and Security. In the context of the implementation of the inter-ministerial Strategic Guideline on Security and Development in Austrian development policy, related activities involved collaboration in the OECD DAC International Network for Conflict and Fragility (INCAF) and in preparing the expert paper on a nation-wide concept for operations abroad as well as the holding of the second “3C3 Retreat” at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Stadtschlaining.

In the gender field, the focus was placed on the implementation of the recommendations issued based on the evaluation of the ADC Policy Document on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women 2004–2011. In this respect a capacity development plan was developed in order to take better account of equality perspectives in the ADC activity areas. This plan covers the development of practical working tools towards integrating the gender aspect in the nexus areas “water, energy and food security” as well as in-house further training activities for ADA staff. By providing gender-related expertise in one of the working groups at the “Vienna+20” human rights conference, ADC contributed to the preparation of final recommendations.

In the education and science sector, the priorities pursued by ADC related to vocational education and higher education. The higher education programme Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research

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3 Coordinated, complementary and coherent action in fragile States, Vienna 3C Appeal, http://www.entwicklung.at/uploads/media/Vienna_3C_Appeal_01.pdf
**Introduction**

for Development (APPEAR) enables multi-annual partnerships between higher education and/or research institutions in the priority countries of ADC-South and Austria and is aimed at enabling comprehensive capacity development. In 2013, a total of 17 academic partnerships with an average term of three years were operated under APPEAR. Countries in the key regions Danube region/Western Balkans and Black Sea region/South Caucasus were supported in the reform of their respective vocational training sectors and – in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Science and Research – in their integration within the European Higher Education and Research Area.

Public awareness-raising activities were launched in the context of the “International Year of Water Cooperation”: a special issue of the world news journal (Weltnachrichten-Schwerpunktheft) dealt with the topic of water, a development dialogue focused on water in August and on the nexus in March; and activities as well as exhibitions were organised in public places. Austria furthermore participated in a number of high-level conferences on the topic, including the conference on cross-border water cooperation in Dushanbe in June and the “Budapest Water Summit” in October focusing on the positioning of the water sector with respect to the post-2015 development agenda. A comprehensive analysis of the ADC’s activities in the water sector in Uganda confirmed that this long-term commitment has produced excellent development results, which were discussed at the annual ADA meeting in the presence of the Ugandan State Minister for Water Resources, Betty Bigombe.

In the specialised area of sustainable energy the establishment of further regional centres for renewable energy and energy efficiency was a focus of activities. Agreement was reached with the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on establishing further energy centres for the eastern (East African Community, EAC) and southern (Southern African Development Community, SADC) communities of African states to be developed based on the model of the ECOWAS Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. Austria is thus the first bilateral donor to contribute to three regional centres of competence, which cover a total of 34 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Since July, the office of the UNSG’s Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) initiative has been headquartered in Vienna.

It the thematic area of environment and natural resources the topic of climate change and climate funding dominated the agenda. In the first six months of the year, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management commissioned the ADA with allocating funding of approximately 7.6 million euros for climate relevant measures. The ADA also contributes with its expert knowledge to the OECD/DAC working party on climate finance. Another priority was following the post-2015 discussion at UN level and the development of thematic statements in the context of EU coordination. Following-up on successful cooperation with the
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DEZA) in connection with Rio+20, a financing agreement was signed on knowledge management in the field of sustainable mountain development.

12.1.2. Policy Coherence

Austria regards development policy as a national task. This principle of policy coherence is thus also enshrined in Article 1 paragraph 5 of the Federal Development Cooperation Act. In cooperation with Parliament, the relevant ministries, social partners and NGOs as well as the interested public, the Federal Government develops the overall strategy aimed at strengthening coherence within Austrian Development Cooperation, adapting it to the latest challenges and promoting development policy education. The current Three-Year Programme 2013–2015, which was adopted by the Austrian Council of Ministers on 18 December 2012, thus starts with a mission statement that had been negotiated with all relevant Austrian players. The new Government Programme 2013–2018 also refers explicitly to policy coherence stressing that all stakeholders of Austrian development policy are to pursue common goals.

At the invitation of State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka, the “Entwicklungspolitisches Jour Fixe” (jour fixe on development policy issues) – the new central networking platform involving all Austrian players in the field of development policy – was held on 22 March and on 3 October.

The whole-of-government approach was specifically fostered by the 3C approach in the field of security and development. Under this concept, a two-day seminar, bringing together civil society and representatives from the ministries involved for an exchange of views and discussions on the continuation of joint projects was held at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution in Stadtschlaining. In March, a role play exercise for the whole-of-nation engagement in East Africa/Somalia was conducted in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and the National Defence Academy.

Austria participates regularly in both the EU’s and the OECD’s networks for policy coherence.

12.1.3. Budget for Development Cooperation

According to preliminary data reported to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Austrian Official Development Assistance (ODA) slightly increased in 2013 and amounted to 882.46 million euros. As was the case in the previous year, this represents 0.28 per cent of gross national income (GNI).
12.1.4. Evaluation

Under the sharing of responsibilities agreement, the FMEIA is responsible for selecting the strategic evaluations and their themes, while the ADA is in charge of operational management. Strategic evaluations generally cover specific ADC themes, sectors, instruments or country strategies. These strategic evaluations are tendered in accordance with 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 subsequently awarded contracts to perform the evaluation.

In 2013, evaluations were completed in the area of private sector, the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR) as well as the reviews of the country strategy Bhutan and on the Strategic Guideline on Environment & Development. Plans were prepared for implementing the recommendations based on these evaluations/reviews. Work also began on the strategic evaluation of development policy communication and education.

At international level, the FMEIA and the ADA were regularly represented on the competent evaluation bodies and networks within the EU, the group of German-speaking evaluation services (DACH) – which is composed of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Luxembourg – and in the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Austria took over the vice-chair in the DAC Evaluation Committee.

12.2. Bilateral Development Cooperation

12.2.1. Geographic Priorities

12.2.1.1. Key Region Central America and the Caribbean

Based on the Regional Strategy Central America 2009 – 2013, ADC supported the process of economic and social integration in Central America. The programmes implemented to this end aim to improve the framework for small commercial and farming enterprises and to enable marginalised populations to call for and claim respect of their human rights. The focus is placed on the countries’ most disadvantaged border regions. Together with the EU and Finland, ADC promoted renewable forms of energy under the Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America.

ADC activities in the priority country Nicaragua were based on the country strategy Nicaragua 2011–2013 and involved programmes in the production sector (focusing on value added chains and production increases in the agricultural area) as well as on the healthcare sector. A special focus was placed on the two poorest regions at the country’s Atlantic coast.
To ensure their sustainable completion, all bilateral programmes with Nicaragua as well as the regional programmes in Central America have since the beginning of 2011 been prepared in collaboration with local partner organisations and/or the handing-over initiated by local institutions or other donors. This “phasing-out” was completed by the end of the year. Successful cooperation with NGOs and in the context of business partnerships is, however, being continued.

Since 2007, the Caribbean region, which is especially prone to natural disasters, has been a priority region of ADC. With a view to promoting regional integration, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is the main cooperation partner. The focus is on strengthening local capacities in the field of disaster risk management as well as renewable energies and energy efficiency.

In the field of disaster management, efficient regional coordination and cooperation is a sine qua non. Austria thus again supports CARICOM’s Caribbean disaster emergency response management agency (CDEMA) in the second phase and co-funds the UN regional Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) in the Caribbean.

With regard to the improvement of institutional and political framework conditions and the development of technical and economic capacities for the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency, Austria supported the Caribbean Renewable Energy Programme (CREDP) in cooperation with CARICOM and the German Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ, German association for international cooperation).

12.2.1.2. Key Region West Africa

In the key region West Africa, Austria’s focus remained on the thematic priorities of energy and conflict prevention. In addition to the ongoing projects with civil society organisations and UNDOC in the field of conflict prevention, a project aimed at supporting the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPTC) was prepared in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports.

The regional centre for renewable energy and energy efficiency (ECREEE), which has been supported by Austria since its establishment, continues to develop its position as a specialised regional institution for renewable energies and energy efficiency at regional and international level and is already conducting pilot projects in the region. In the key region West Africa, ECREEE has also evolved into the hub for the UN initiative “Sustainable Energy for All” (SE4All). Providing ongoing personnel and financial resources, Austria remains an important partner of the energy centre.

Against the background of the food crisis in the entire Sahel region, the set of issues related to food, food security and securing of livelihoods as well as resilience were made a special priority of ADC and pursued particularly in cooperation with the OECD Sahel and West Africa Club and ECOWAS.
This area of activity involves inter alia cooperation with NGOs, humanitarian assistance and agricultural research.

In the priority country Burkina Faso, Austria – based on the bilateral cooperation agreement which was extended in agreement with the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Burkina Faso until 2016 – continued to provide support in the areas of vocational education and training, the promotion of trades and crafts and rural development. As well as promoting the development and implementation of national sectoral policies in these areas, Austria supported strengthening resilience with regard to food security and climate change. Adopting a systemic and integrated approach, Austria also cooperates with the Boucle de Mouhoun region.

The regional development fund set up under the related programme proved an efficient tool for promoting autonomy and responsiveness to actual requirements. This focus on people’s needs and the direct involvement of target groups proved to be the fund’s special strengths. The projects funded usually succeed very quickly and have a positive and sustainable impact on people’s living conditions and circumstances. Such successful projects included a dairy, honey production, small-scale infrastructure for livestock and general produce markets, drinking water supply and training in various crafts and trades. The third phase of this regional development programme commenced in 2013.

Against the background of the food crisis in the entire Sahel region, food security was made a special priority – also with respect to measures that supplement the cooperation programme, such as NGO projects, humanitarian assistance and agricultural research.

12.2.1.3. Key Region East Africa

At regional level, Austria focuses especially on promoting partnerships in the fields of private sector and development, science and research and NGO cooperation. Support was, for instance, provided to a programme operated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) under which a regional network of associations for the promotion of organic farming is being developed in East Africa. With respect to the nexus concept, a programme aimed at enabling rural innovation (ERI) and generating economic momentum in the rural area proved especially effective.

In the priority country Ethiopia, ADC was mainly focused on the fields of rural development/food security and healthcare. Activities also focused on the areas of renewable energy, gender, science and research. ADC contributed to funding a national multi-donor programme that aims to improve public services in the healthcare, education, agricultural and water supply sectors.

In line with the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan, ADC activities in the priority country Uganda focus primarily on the two areas of water supply and sanitation as well as law, the justice sector and peace. In line with
the portfolio approach, ADC also supported common donor/basket funding programmes in both areas. In the field of law, justice and peace it also strove to support NGOs in their work and to strengthen accountability and access to law in Uganda. Together with other donors, Austria furthermore supports a facility for the promotion of democracy and good governance under which NGOs as well as government institutions and parliament may apply for funding. ADC also provided support in the form of study grants as well as study and science programmes. Furthermore, work also commenced on the implementation of a project involving an overall volume of more than 30 million euro for investments in water supply and sanitation in small rural cities.

12.2.1.4. Key Region Southern Africa

In the key region Southern Africa, the rule of law, land use and renewable energy are the central areas of ADC activities. This thematic focus of cooperation is outlined in the open-ended Memorandum of Understanding between Austria and the Southern Development Community (SADC). Regional involvement of ADC takes place under the “Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme for the period 2008–2013” concluded between the EC and cooperation partners with the SADC, based on the SADC’s regional development plans, the “Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan” and the “Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Peace and Security”. Coordinated with the former, Austria’s involvement thus contributes directly to the plans’ implementation.

The general objective of regional ADC involvement is based on strengthening democratic processes as the prerequisite for sustainable social and economic growth. ADC thus contributes to reducing poverty in the SADC area.

In this spirit ADC, together with other donors contributes to the SADC-UNODC regional programme “Making the SADC Region Safer from Drugs and Crime”. ADC focuses especially on fighting violence against women and children. This contribution is also in line with the Austrian Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking as well as the EU Gender Action Plan and its EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls.

Together with the Department for International Development and in delegated cooperation to the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, ADC also contributes to 2nd Phase of the Energy and Environment Partnership Southern & Eastern Africa. This partnership aims at improving the green energy balance of the participating states and makes an important contribution towards reducing poverty through economic development.

Under the 2nd phase of the Southern African Solar Thermal Training and Demonstration Initiative, the development of solar thermal installations in the SADC area is being supported until 2016 in collaboration with the OPEC Fund for International Development. In analogy to the centre for renewable
energy and energy efficiency in West Africa, ADC in a first operational phase supports the development of such a centre in the SADC region (SACREEE).

The country strategy 2009–2013 for the priority country Mozambique was drafted on the basis of the current Mozambican Government Programme and the Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty, PARP 2011–2014. As agreed with the government of Mozambique, the province of Sofala remains an ADC priority region. The relevant activities are directed at promoting national decentralisation efforts with the thematic focus being placed on rural drinking water supply, sanitation, smallholder agriculture and improvement of local administration.

The activities under the country strategy are implemented in cooperation with the Mozambican government, especially with the subnational authorities of the province government of Sofala.

In Mozambique, ADC makes available both General Budget Support and Sector Budget Support. The latter is a contribution to the budget of Mozambique’s Ministry of Agriculture and is earmarked for the implementation of the National Agricultural Development Strategy.

In the context of Austria’s membership of the Human Rights Council (HRC), ADC also supported initiatives and small projects aimed at promoting human rights, the media as well as peace and security. With a view to fostering Mozambique’s economic prosperity, ADC has joined forces with other Austrian players in order to promote economic cooperation.

12.2.1.5. Key Region Himalayas – Hindu Kush

ADC supports common goals of the region pursued under the auspices of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Activities focus on strengthening resilience against environmental and climate change as well as the protection of natural resources and the improvement of living conditions by enhanced cross-border cooperation.

The country strategy 2010–2013 for the priority country Bhutan forms the basis for the continuation of development cooperation. In Bhutan, ADC focuses on the areas of energy, tourism and governance. In the energy sector, technical assistance was provided to the government of Bhutan as the commissioning body responsible for the construction of the Dagachhu hydro power plant. Financial assistance was provided for the electrification of the remote mountain villages of Soe, Lingzhi and Laya. With respect to the tourism sector, the focus was on further developing the curriculum for the Royal Institute for Tourism and Hospitality and the advancement of construction work on the connected training hotel. In the governance sector, particular importance is attached to strengthening institutional and personnel capacities. To this end, cooperation with the judiciary, the Bhutanese Court of Auditors and civil society was continued. Likewise, the education and train-
ing programmes directed at Bhutanese experts and hosted in Austria were continued.

12.2.1.6. Priority Palestinian Territories
Criteria for the selection of ADC programmes and projects are compliance with the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2011–2013 and regard for both parts of the Palestinian Territories, i.e. the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. ADC involvement focused on the areas of health, water/sewage, sanitation and humanitarian aid and co-funding of a multi-donor programme in Area C (in line with the Oslo Accords a territory within the Palestinian Territories that is administered by Israel). ADC programmes are coordinated with the relevant ministries and other bilateral donors and implemented largely through Palestinian ministries, the European Commission and international organisations (such as the UNRWA and UNDP). Other projects in place relate to cooperation in the science sector and NGO co-funding.

12.2.1.7. South East / Eastern Europe
12.2.1.7.1. Key Region Danube Region/Western Balkans
Approximation to or integration into EU structures remained an important aspect of cooperation with the Western Balkan countries. Sectoral and thematic priorities were private sector development, education/vocational training, the environment, water/sanitation and energy as well as strengthening governance, decentralisation, the rule of law and civil society.

With the exception of Kosovo (country strategy 2013–2020), bilateral ADC is gradually withdrawing from South East Europe/Western Balkans.

In the priority country Albania, ADC support focused mainly on the fields of water and sanitation, vocational education, regional development and integration of marginalised social groups. In the cross-cutting areas of governance and gender equality the focus was placed on developing the Integrated Planning System and establishing Gender Focal Points as well as on gender responsive budgeting. ADA allocated EU funds in the context of delegated cooperation (Indirect Centralised Management, ICM). ADC also played a leading role in donor coordination with respect to support for the One-UN Initiative.

Cooperation in the priority country Kosovo is based on the country programme 2013–2020, under which measures mainly in the fields of private sector development and rural/regional development (focusing on the wider Suhareka region) are being funded. In the priority sector of tertiary education, further measures were launched that build on previous successful activities in this area and contributed substantially to stabilising the tertiary sector. Cross-cutting themes are governance, gender equality and the environment. Special attention is being placed on strengthening government institutions
Bilateral Development Cooperation

which are currently being built up. Inter-ethnic cooperation and conflict prevention are among the goals pursued by the quadrilateral housing and integration project directed at the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian minorities in Gjakova/Djakovica (West Kosovo). This project is co-funded by ADC, Slovenia and Liechtenstein and implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Cooperation with UNICEF and UNDP was intensified.

12.2.1.7.2. Key Region Black Sea Region / South Caucasus

Based on the bilateral country strategies and programmes for Armenia and for Georgia that were completed and published in 2012, Austrian development involvement in the South Caucasus focuses on the agricultural and forestry sector. ADC interventions focusing on rural development are aimed at improving framework conditions in order to increase local value added and intensify trade and investment. The ultimate goal pursued by ADC involvement is fighting poverty, especially in the border regions.

Cross-cutting themes include conflict prevention based on confidence and security building measures in the Georgian and Armenian border regions as well as governance/decentralisation. Geographically, the focus is placed on the southern (in Georgia) and on the northern (in Albania) border regions with the prospect of cross-border cooperation especially in economic matters. The ADA coordination office that is responsible for both priority countries was opened in Tbilisi in October.

The most important goal of ADC activities in Moldova is creating new prospects for the future for those living in rural areas. This goal is pursued on the one hand by improving water supply and effluent disposal under a large-scale water supply and sanitation project that is co-funded by ADC, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (DEZA) and the EU, and on the other hand by labour market-oriented vocational training and the promotion of vocational schools that provide agricultural training. Other activities launched towards achieving this goal include the provision of social support to the impoverished rural population and the EU-oriented strengthening of public administration. ADC supports a project operated by the Council of Europe in Transnistria which strives to contribute to conflict prevention through confidence building measures and strengthening civil society on both sides of the Dniester River.

12.2.2. NGO Co-financing

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are important partners of ADC. Under NGO Cooperation International, programmes and projects launched on the NGOs’ own initiative and financed by both their own funding as well as funding provided by ADC are being implemented. The basis for the thematic orientation of NGO co-financing was set out in the ADC Policy Document on NGO Cooperation.
Eleven Austrian NGOs hold framework programme agreements with a total contractual value of approximately 20 million euros, covering a period of three years. They have implemented important initiatives in the fields of education, training, rural development, food security, healthcare and disaster prevention. A programme for the posting of experts and interns was successfully implemented under the personnel development cooperation scheme. Within the framework of individual NGO projects, 23 projects were approved in developing countries of the South, in South East Europe, Eastern Europe, in the Caucasus and in Central Asia. In addition to ongoing projects co-financed by the EU, a further 15 new funding agreements for the next few years were also concluded.

The role of civil society organisations as independent and indispensable development cooperation players plays an eminent role at international level. In their work, NGOs are increasingly focusing on “political dialogue” in order to achieve sustainable changes and improvements in the partner countries. The international programmes “Open Forum” (CSO exchange at EU level) and “Better Aid” (CSO exchange in developing countries) that were supported in the context of NGO Cooperation International were successfully completed.

A new framework agreement was signed with the Austrian platform “AG Globale Verantwortung” (WG global responsibility). The objective pursued in this respect is strengthening NGOs’ competences to enable them to contribute more effectively to designing the framework conditions in national, European and international development policy and practice in their capacity as players and dialogue partners.

During the biannual “donor meetings” that bring together representatives from development agencies and ministries from EU Member States, the USA, Canada and Australia, NGO Cooperation International hosted an international meeting in Vienna. In these meetings, relevant players exchange views and experiences, coordinate approaches and jointly consider methods and tools for development cooperation.

12.3. Multilateral Development Cooperation

12.3.1. The European Union

The EU (Member States and Commission) is the largest donor of Official Development Assistance (ODA) worldwide. Austria’s financial contribution to the EU’s development cooperation is the largest single item of Austrian ODA. In 2013, Austria contributed 236.06 million euros to development cooperation under the EU budget and the European Development Fund (EDF). This amounts to 26.75 per cent of Austria’s total ODA (preliminary figures).
The year 2013 was marked by the **difficult agreement on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014–2020**, which was eventually reached by the EU Council in February but only adopted on 27 June by the European Parliament (EP). For the first time ever, the EU financial framework was reduced compared to the previous period and the EP also had a greater say in terms of the regulations’ content. While the EU’s total budget was reduced by 3.7% for the period 2014–2020, Heading 4, that covers financial instruments for external action, saw a 3.3% increase. The total budget volume of the extra-budgetary EDF (European Development Fund) was also not cut compared with the previous period. With respect to thematic negotiations relating to the legal bases (such as implementation regulations), the EP made use of its new intervention opportunities.

The **EU contribution to the Post-2015 Agenda** (successor instrument to the Millennium Development Goals – MDGs, Rio+20 Follow up, Financing for Development) was the most important strategic topic in the field of DC, both at international and at EU level. In June, the Council Conclusions on the Overarching Post-2015 Agenda were adopted and were at the same time the EU positions represented at the MDG special summit in New York at the end of September. The Conclusions on Financing Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015 of December contain the first generally worded EU position on development financing. What is also new is increased cross-sectoral cooperation of various specialised areas. The two Council Conclusions mentioned above were, for instance, prepared in a joint meeting of the Council Working Groups CODEV (development cooperation), WPIEI Global (international environment issues) and CONUN (UN).

The thematic groundwork for the re-orientation of EU development policy from 2014 onwards was laid by the Council Conclusions on Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change. Based on these Conclusions, the regulations were prepared relating to the individual EU external instruments, such as DCI (Development Cooperation Instruments), EDF (European Development Fund) or ENI (European Neighbourhood Instrument). These regulations contain a detailed description on what can be funded under the various EU external instruments and are thus legally binding.

Under the **Irish EU Council Presidency** in the first half of the year, Council Conclusions on food security and the EU approach towards resilience were adopted.

Under the subsequent **Lithuanian EU Council Presidency**, a number of Council Conclusions were adopted on the topic of “Financing Poverty Eradication and Sustainable Development Beyond 2015”, on democratic governance, the European Year for Development 2015 and on policy coherence for development.
Austria focused specifically on strategically important areas, such as designing the EU’s external instruments for DC or the post-2015 agenda and participated actively in the relevant discussions. Austria also contributes to areas on which it has long-standing experience and specific know how, such as water or sustainable energy.

12.3.2. The United Nations

The dominating topic in the field of UN development cooperation was the post-2015 development agenda. The goal is on the one hand to develop a follow-up instrument to the Millennium Development Goals after their “expiry” in 2015 and, on the other hand to prepare the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as adopted at the Rio+20 Conference as well as sustainable development funding.

On 30 May, the High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, established by the UNSG and chaired by the British Prime Minister and the Presidents of Indonesia and Liberia, presented its final report. This report inter alia calls for developing one sustainable development agenda that is to focus on eradicating extreme poverty, calling to account both industrial and developing countries which are to contribute towards achieving this goal to the best of their abilities. The report stipulates that a limited number of concrete goals are to be elaborated in order to implement the new agenda. Each of these new goals is to “have a strong impact based on existing research, send out a compelling message, be easy to understand, measurable, widely applicable, consensus-based and grounded in the voice of people”.

After protracted negotiations, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals agreed on at the Rio+20 summit was established. Chaired by Hungary and Kenya, the Working Group held a total of six meetings in 2013. The most important guidelines for sustainable development goals were defined in a first interim report, which was presented in July. The core element of the future agenda thus consists of eradicating poverty worldwide and equal inclusion of all three components of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental aspects), the possibility of adapting global goals to the respective national situation, establishing a strengthened, global partnership; considering poverty as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and involving all groups of society, including the most disadvantaged.

In addition, a UN Intergovernmental Committee of Experts on Sustainable Development Funding took up work on 28 August. This committee, which is composed of 30 experts, is to meet four times in total (of which two meetings were held in 2013) with work on relevant activities being conducted between meetings in three clusters. The experts’ group is assisted by a UN working group headed by UN-DESA (UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs).
With respect to the post-2015 development agenda, the most important meeting held in 2013 was the **Special Event towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals** that took place in the context of the UNGA on 25 September. At this summit at the Heads of State and Government level, important recommendations towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, including a new global partnership, were adopted and the most important guidelines for the post-2015 development agenda defined. The focus is to be placed on the eradication of poverty and sustainable development. Under this concept all processes towards elaborating the MDG successor goals, the Sustainable Development Goals, and sustainable development financing are to be included in one single framework document with a uniform catalogue of goals. This is to be applicable to all countries in the world but shall be sufficiently adaptable to respond to the respective national situation. The new framework, which is to promote peace and security, democracy, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights, will be elaborated within the framework of an inter-governmental process starting in September 2014.

The **High Level Political Forum (HLPF)** also convened for the first time at the Heads of State and Government level on 24 September. The objective pursued by the meeting was to establish the HLPF as a platform for the coordination and implementation of the sustainable development agenda. In this connection, numerous participants underlined the importance of the HLPF in ensuring a balanced combination of the triad of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental sustainability). The UNSG announced the establishment of a scientific body of advisors in the UNESCO context which is to ensure research findings are included in the post-2015 debate.

The annual session of the UN Development Programme (**UNDP**) held from 3 to 14 June was dominated by the implementation of the current Strategic Plan that expires in 2013, the situation of the available financial resources (especially in the light of shrinking core contributions attributable to the global crisis), the results produced by the efforts towards more transparency and accountability as well as the efforts towards achieving the MDGs. The Strategic Plan 2014–2017 was adopted at the second regular session of the Executive Board held from 9 to 13 September. This plan aims in particular to enhance efficiency, results orientation, focus and transparency while at the same time improving coordination of UNDP work with other funds and programmes. Austria made a core contribution of 2 million euros to UNDP and also contributed to the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund and the Thematic Trust Funds to Combat HIV/AIDS and to Improve Maternal Health.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (**UNICEF**) also adopted a new Strategic Plan for the period 2014–2017, which was adopted at the second regular session of the Executive Board in New York from 3 to 6 September. The priorities outlined in the new Strategic Plan relate to realizing the rights of every child with special account being taken of children who are most disadvantaged and excluded, their families and communities and enabling fair
access to opportunities. Austria supported UNICEF’s work by providing a core contribution of 1.2 million euros. Austria also funded projects on children’s health and the rights of the child in Kosovo. Austria furthermore contributed to fighting polio in Syria.

The **UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)** has been vested with the mandate to eradicate poverty in the 48 least developed countries by granting micro loans and promoting local development. Austria supported the work of the UNCDF by providing a core contribution of 1 million euros, thus remaining one of the fund’s largest bilateral donors.

The objective pursued by the **UN Population Fund (UNFPA)** is providing universal access to sexual and reproductive health, the realisation of women’s reproductive rights as well as the reduction of maternal mortality in order to contribute to improving the fate of women and girls. Austria provided a core contribution of 100,000 euros towards funding the work of the UNFPA and also makes a voluntary contribution to the Maternal Health Thematic Fund.

On 1 September, Mukhisa Kituyi (Kenya) took office as Secretary-General of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He succeeded Supachai Panitchpakdi (Thailand) who had held this office for two consecutive terms (2005–2013). The new Secretary-General strives to add visibility to UNCTAD’s work and make its efforts more tangible and implement improvements in the management and operational areas. Kituyi furthermore supports UNCTAD’s active contribution to the post-2015 development agenda and to this end set up a special working group.

The key topic on the agenda of the **UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)** was the ongoing process aimed at revising its structure. At the Executive Board meeting in Nairobi (15 to 19 April) mainly the donor countries and the Latin American states advocated a new structure which is to make UN-Habitat more independent of the UN Secretariat, while the African Group rejected this approach. The architecture of UN-Habitat thus remained unchanged.

### 12.3.3. OECD/DAC

Austria is one of the 28 members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which is mandated with preparing qualitative targets for its members’ development cooperation, analysing their development cooperation performance (Official Development Assistance, ODA), and having quality and quantity of these activities reviewed by other members of the Committee (peer reviews).

At the end of 2012/beginning of 2013, the former Norwegian Minister of the Environment and International Development, Erik Solheim, took the chair of the DAC. A topic that is currently the subject of lively discussions within the DAC is whether low-interest development cooperation loans and credits can be reported as ODA, and the definition of ODA in general.
In its Development Co-operation Report 2013, the DAC pointed out that annual development cooperation funding had reached a peak in 2013, the highest volume ever thus totalled 134.8 billion US dollars.

12.3.4. Assignments of Young Austrians

Young Austrian university graduates are given the opportunity to serve on duty tours lasting a maximum of two years as Junior Professional Officers (JPO) with UN organisations in order to gain first-hand experience of working in a multilateral environment. The FMEIA bears the costs of such placements.

In 2013, a total of six Austrian Junior Professional Officers worked with various UN organisations, including UN Woman, OHCHR and the UN Secretariat in New York, Geneva and Vienna.

The European Commission’s Junior Experts in Delegation Training Programme enables qualified Austrian university graduates to complete a one to two year (at the maximum) duty tour with the EU delegations. One male Austrian worked with the EAAS in Mozambique, and a female Austrian worked at the EC representation in Sierra Leone.
13. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy


Some 20 years after the adoption of Agenda 21 as the leitbild of sustainable development, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held at Heads of State and Government level again in Rio de Janeiro in June 2012.

Thus, 2013 was characterised by the start of the implementation of the outcome of this conference, the final declaration “The Future We Want”. This document sets out inter alia a common understanding of green economy and an intergovernmental process for the definition of sustainable development goals (SDGs) applicable not only to developing countries but also to industrialise countries. The main topics addressed are green economy in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable development, as well as redesigning the institutional framework for sustainable development at international level.

Still in its initial stages, this process aims to define universal sustainability goals (for detailed information please see section 12.3.2.). As the environmental – as well as the social and economic – dimension of sustainable development is explicitly taken account of in its catalogue of goals, this process is of special relevance also from the global environmental protection point of view.

13.2. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

In line with its work programme 2012–2013, UNEP is active in six sub-programmes: climate change, natural disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, international environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste as well as resource efficiency, sustainable consumption and production.

From 18 to 22 February, the UNEP Governing Council held its first-ever session in the universal membership format. This meeting was mainly dedicated to the implementation of those Rio+20 decisions relevant for UNEP. A major item on the programme’s agenda is strengthening UNEP. As a first step in this direction the Governing Council was renamed “United Nations Environment Assembly of UNEP” (UNEA). The first UNEA meeting to be held in Nairobi from 23 to 27 June 2014 will focus on UNEP’s input under the post-2015 process.

UNEP’s activities are articulated in two areas: in the normative area it provides global decision makers with scientific data as a basis for their political decisions; in its second area of activity UNEP implements concrete projects at country level, especially in cooperation with UNDP.
13.3. Global Environmental Protection Agreements

From 11 to 22 November, the 19th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, COP 19/ CMP 9) convened in Warsaw. The conference served as an interim conference on the way towards a comprehensive global climate protection agreement, which is to be adopted at the COP 21 to be held in Paris at the end of 2015.

The EU’s main political goal, i.e. defining concrete steps and milestones for the negotiations to be held over the next two years, was achieved. In the lead-up to the conference, the EU had already proposed a gradual approach. According to this concept, in 2014 all states agree to to submit emission reduction commitments to be implemented from 2020 onwards (“proposed commitments”) – which are then to be evaluated at international level. The agreement eventually reached by the Conference in Warsaw specifies that:

- the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action (ADP) is to prepare concrete elements for a draft negotiating text as of its first meeting in March 2014;

- all countries are invited to put forward their nationally determined contributions to global emission reduction prior to the 2015 Climate Change Conference in a manner that guarantees clarity and transparency of their individual contributions;

- the ADP is to identify the information used (“criteria”) by the states in formulating their national contributions before the 2014 UN Climate Change Conference in Lima;

- the “firewall“, i.e. the strict differentiation between developed and industrialised countries is no longer relevant in the current UNFCCC architecture.

Austria organised two independent side events (on waste and climate change-adaptation) and contributed a presentation to a third side event (on climate finance). The next global climate change conference (COP 20/CMP 10) will take place at the end of November/beginning of December 2014 in Lima.

At the 32nd Session of the Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution of the UN Economic Commission for Europe held in Geneva from 9 to 13 December, the states parties adopted an amendment to the EMEP Protocol. This Protocol ensures long-term financing of the Co-operative Programme for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Long-range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP). The states parties’ financial contributions for the period 2013–2015 were redefined. The parties furthermore agreed on a new work programme and a revised guideline for reporting emission data to be submitted at regular intervals to the Geneva-based UNECE Secretariat.
Austria is a state party to the Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna – CITES. The 16th Conference of the Parties (CoP16) was held in Bangkok from 3 to 14 March. Discussions focused on polar bears, maritime species, elephants, rhinoceroses and tropical timber. While the proposal by the USA on transferring polar bears from Appendix II to Appendix I failed, the inclusion of maritime species (sharks and manta rays) and more than one hundred species of tropical timber from Madagascar (Malagasy rosewood, ebony and other types of rosewood) in Appendix II is of historical importance. As regards rhinoceroses, the conference agreed on a clear message addressed at Vietnam and Mozambique, which play a decisive role in smuggling and consumption. If these states continue to disrespect CITES provisions, trade sanctions will be imposed against them. As regards elephants, illegal consumption and trade in ivory is especially widespread in China, Kenya, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Uganda, Tanzania and Vietnam. If these states continue to disregard the trade ban on ivory, sanctions may be adopted within one year.

After four years of negotiations, agreement was reached in January on an international legally binding treaty to reduce mercury pollution – the Minamata Convention on Mercury. In October, Austria and 90 other states signed the Mercury Convention at the diplomatic conference in Kumamoto and Minamata (Japan); 110 states signed the resolutions adopted at the conference. China, India and Russia did not sign the convention, while six EU Member States only signed the resolutions for the time being. Austria will ratify the convention.

The Minamata Convention provides for the longer-term reduction of emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds into air, water and soil in order to protect human health and the environment. It furthermore regulates primary mercury mining, trade, products and processes. Owing to its long-range atmospheric transport and accumulation in maritime organisms this toxic heavy metal constitutes a global problem.

From 28 April to 10 May, the simultaneous extraordinary meeting and the three ordinary meetings of the Conference of the Parties to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on Certain Hazardous Chemicals and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants took place in Geneva. These joint conferences of the parties served to strengthen coordination and cooperation among the three legally independent conventions in order to foster their efficiency and foster the implementation of their activities. A deepened cooperation between the three conventions and SAICM (Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Agreement) and the Mercury Convention was enshrined in an omnibus decision.

A high-level segment, held on 9 and 10 May, resulted in the Geneva Statement on Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste, which approves of the outcome of Rio+20 and the continuation of enhanced cooperation and coor-
Sustainable Energy for All

dination in the chemicals and waste sector. Furthermore, the consultative process for an integrated approach on financing options for the chemicals and waste sector was endorsed.

At the **UNEP Governing Council meeting** in February, the consultative process for an integrated approach on financing options for the chemicals and waste sector was successfully concluded. At the **UNEP Governing Council meeting** in February. These options designate the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the common financing mechanism, which shall (co)fund all future chemicals and waste conventions and processes. However, an additional voluntary financing programme for the implementation of international chemicals and waste activities will also be established.

The **25th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer** was held from 21 to 25 October in Bangkok. Discussions focused on the amendments to the Montreal Protocol submitted by a number of parties. In this connection, the question on whether partially halogenated hydro fluorocarbons (HFCs) should be covered by the Montreal Protocol was dealt with. The TEAP (Technology and Assessment Panel) undertook a cost assessment with a view to the next replenishment of the “Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol” established to fund exit scenario projects by developing countries.

The **United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** focuses on the problem of soil and land degradation leading to the inability of populations in disadvantaged areas to sustain self-sufficiency. Discussions at the 11th conference of the parties held in Windhoek (Namibia) from 16 to 27 September focused on the influence of desertification, soil degradation and drought on poverty reduction, food security and other global goals. The Austrian coordinator for the Convention represented the Western European states in his capacity as Vice President of the Conference of the Parties in the Bureau (COP-Bureau) until September.

### 13.4. Sustainable Energy for All

The Sustainable Energy for All (**SE4All**) Initiative launched by the UN in 2011 was strengthened by the appointment of former UNIDO Director General Kandeh Yumkella as the UNSG’s Special Representative for Sustainable Energy and by the establishment of a Global Support Office in Vienna. Currently, twelve individuals are employed at the office for international activities. As the SE4All Office officially belongs to the UN, it automatically falls under the headquarters agreement between Austria and the UN; efforts in connection with the SE4All’s legal personality are currently ongoing. The establishment of the initiative’s office in Vienna can be considered a consequence of Austria’s consistent commitment to promoting sustainable energy.
13.5. Nuclear Safety

Austria remains committed to maintaining its clear opposition to nuclear power both bilaterally and within international organisations. For Austria, nuclear power is neither a sustainable form of energy nor is it a viable or acceptable option for tackling climate change.

Taking into account the entire fuel cycle (although the costs of the globally unresolved question of final storage are still wholly uncertain) and the costs involved in building, operating and finally decommissioning the plants, nuclear power is clearly not an economically viable model. Operating countries thus increasingly call for public subsidies. An EC consultation paper outlining guidelines on environmental and energy aid as well as an internal draft circulated in July subsequently set out special rules regulating Member States’ provision of state aid to nuclear power. Not least as a result of resistance put up by Austria, a new draft that no longer included nuclear energy was submitted in 2013. Hence, the a priori admissibility of such state aid for nuclear energy can thus still not be taken for granted.

As a result of the nuclear reactor disaster in Fukushima (on 11 March 2011), Switzerland, Italy and particularly Germany decided to renounce this form of energy. The implementation of this decision differed from country to country, but was in all three cases welcomed by the general public. Against this background, checking and increasing the reactor safety of existing power plants has developed into a key concern in the context of European and international cooperation.

At the multilateral level, the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) launched the so-called post-Fukushima process. The most tangible result produced to date by this process is an Action Plan. Although it does not conform with all of Austria’s demands – in particular in terms of transparency and liability rules – it has to be welcomed as a step in the right direction.

Introduced on Austria’s initiative, risk and safety assessments (“stress tests”) were performed in all nuclear power plants in the EU as well as in Switzerland and the Ukraine. They were conducted along two parallel tracks: a “safety track” focusing on aspects of operational safety and a “security track” focusing on security threats from outside (terrorist acts, aircraft crashes and cyber security).

The final reports on tests along both tracks were submitted to the European Council in June 2012. The next step consisted of the drafting of National Action Plans, which underwent peer review processes at expert-level at the beginning of 2013. Austria supplements this by a plant-specific follow-up with the operators and/or supervisory authorities of nuclear power plants located close to the Austrian border.

Within the framework of EURATOM, Austria continues to consistently oppose an EU-funded expansion of nuclear energy. This position was also
Nuclear Safety

persistently defended in the negotiations on the Framework Programme for Research 2013/2014. Furthermore, the implementation of the programme is closely monitored in the context of cooperation in the field of nuclear safety (Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation – INSC).

The safety and security dialogues, conducted on the basis of bilateral agreements with those neighbouring states operating or planning to build nuclear power plants, were continued. Within the framework of these nuclear information agreements, experts meetings were held with Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

With regard to the planned expansion of the Temelin nuclear power plant in the Czech Republic involving the construction of two additional reactors as well as the expansion of the Mochovce nuclear power plant in Slovakia, Austria continues to make full use of all available means of intervention and influence based on the framework of cross-border Environmental Impact Assessments in line with the relevant international agreements and EU legislation.
14.1. Objectives and Priorities

Culture and especially traditional, prestigious culture shapes the image Austria enjoys in the world. In order to also position Austria as a future-oriented country, international cultural policy activities focus on communicating the contemporary aspects of Austria’s cultural and scientific achievements. Austria is presented as a modern, innovative and creative country, whose achievements in the fields of art, culture and science strike a balance between tradition and innovation.

Guided by the principle of “unity in diversity”, Austria’s international cultural policy contributes pro-actively to fostering European integration and makes a sustainable contribution to global confidence building and peace building by launching initiatives in the field of intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Last but not least, international cultural policy serves as a bridge that strives to facilitate the participation of creative professionals in international cultural dialogue.

All this is implemented by Austria’s international cultural policy network, which currently consists of 31 Austrian Cultural Fora and Cooperation Offices, 88 embassies and consulates-general, 62 Austria Libraries (Österreich-Bibliotheken), nine Austria Institutes (Österreich-Institute), two scientific-technical offices and 120 Austrian lecturers at universities abroad.

Cultural activities abroad must be based on clearly defined priorities. Within a multi-year planning period, the FMEIA thus sets both geographic and content-related priorities, managing them through the allocation of varying annual cultural budgets to the representations abroad. The geographic priorities set by Austrian foreign policy, i.e. the Danube region, the Black Sea area and the Western Balkans are thus synergistically reflected in international cultural activities.

Together with the Vienna Institute for Parliamentarism and Democracy Questions (Wiener Institut für Parlamentarismus und Demokratiefragen) and the foreign liaison office of the City of Vienna (Auslandsbüro der Stadt Wien), the “Good Governance” series, launched in Odessa in 2011, was continued at the Kadir Has University in Istanbul with the conference “Governance and Dialogue” on 10 May. Politicians and scientists from Austria and from some of the countries bordering the Black Sea as well as representatives from numerous non-governmental organisations discussed such topics as understanding and confidence building, tolerance, rule of law, strengthening of government institutions and democratic culture. On 9 May, the International Centre for the Danube and the Black Sea Region (ICDBS) was opened at Kadir Has University. By setting up this research centre in partnership with the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (IDM), the University of Salzburg and the Go-Governance Institute Vienna, another important step was taken towards intensifying cooperation with the Danube and the Black
Objectives and Priorities

Sea regions. The centre is to establish itself as a regional think tank and international forum for innovative research in the fields of business, science, education and culture.

The “Schreibwerkstatt SCHWARZES MEER” (writers’ workshop Black Sea), a programme of working visits for authors from the countries of the Black Sea region, organised since 2010 in cooperation with quartier21 at the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna, this year welcomed writers Tamta Melashvili (Georgia), Vladimir Lorçencov (Moldova), Marine Petrossian (Armenia), Robert Şerban (Romania), Emrah Altınoğlu (Turkey), Oksana Zabuzhko (Ukraine), Çem Selçen (Turkey) and Birgül Oğuz (Turkey).

BLACK SEA CALLING, an exchange programme conducted by the Graz centre for contemporary art < rotor > on behalf of the FMEIA, strives to promote professional exchange and contact between artists from Austria and the Black Sea area. Under this programme, ten Austrian artists were able to live and work in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. In 2012, ten Austrian artists from these nine countries were in turn invited to Austria. On 20 November a group exhibition was opened in the BROT Kunsthalle/Galerie Hilger where works from all participating artists were exhibited.

The cultural, political, economic and human relations that have developed over the centuries in the Danube region form a strong foundation for future joint development. The important role this European key region is playing in the 21st century is corroborated by the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. Cross-border cooperation involving 14 partners – nine EU Member States and five European countries – opens up new opportunities for joint activities in the fields of politics and business, culture, science and education as well as information and communication. From 28 to 29 October, the Second Annual Forum of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region took place at foreign ministers’ level and dealt with future management of the strategy and the enhanced responsibility which this entails.

In the context of Platform Culture – Central Europe, which was set up in 2001 on the initiative of Austria, the design exhibition “What’s for Breakfast” was shown in Tbilisi (Georgia) over the summer. Curators from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Georgia used a selection of contemporary and classical designer pieces from their home countries to create an attractive exhibition featuring a breakfast table. Under Hungarian chairmanship, the Platform organised the concert “Extraordinary Musical Journey Preludes” in Tirana (Albania) in which musicians from all platform countries performed, including the Austrian flautist Doris Nicoletti.

The translation programme Traduki is dedicated to the third geographic priority, the Western Balkans region. The programme was launched in 2008 by the FMEIA, the German Foreign Office, the Swiss culture foundation Pro Helvetia, KulturKontakt Austria, the Goethe-Institute and the S. Fischer Foun-
International Cultural Policy

dation. Further programme partners are the Slovenian book agency JAK, the Ministry for Culture of the Republic of Croatia, the Department for Cultural Affairs of the government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Kulturstiftung Liechtenstein (Liechtenstein Cultural Foundation) and the Leipzig Book Fair. This translation programme for fiction and non-fiction books as well as for children’s and adolescents’ books promotes exchange between the countries participating in the programme (Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Germany, Kosovo, Liechtenstein, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland and Slovenia). This includes encounters between authors, translators, critics, academics and librarians as well as translations.

With some 600 translated books by the end of the year, new partners and new members as well as an increasing number of exchange visits, Traduki has established a successful track record. With literature as a common bond, it has, over the last few years, succeeded in building bridges between people and nations.

The third meeting under the Bukovina Dialogue, held in Suceava (Romania) in May, focused on fostering dialogue and economic relations in the historic Bukovina region. The three main topics discussed dealt with cooperation in developing industrial ecology, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and the preparation of a concept for joint activities in the field of cultural tourism.

This year, the “Talking about Borders” drama competition, organised since 2006 by the FMEIA in cooperation with the Austrian P.E.N. Club and the stage director Christian Papke in the Western Balkan, Danube and Black Sea countries, focused on Ukraine. Out of a total of 55 entries from all over the country, the jury selected the play “Hohe Auflösung – Ein Objektleben für fünf Schauspieler” (“High resolution – an object life for five actors”) by Dmytro Ternovyi. In addition, the drama competition was launched in Georgia.

The Austrian Cultural Season in Russia 2013/2014 is the most diverse and comprehensive festival of Austrian art and culture that has ever been organised in Russia. More than 50 events were organised in 17 Russian cities. Alongside longstanding partner cities (Yekaterinburg and Nizhny Novgorod) it was also possible to attract new cooperation partners (Irkutsk and Murmansk). Highlights of the season included exhibitions by the Vienna Albertina, the Benedictine Monastery of Admont and the Esterházy private collection, a number of projects from Ars Electronica and the sound:frame festival, an exhibition of contemporary art on the first Soviet ice breaker “Lenin”, and guest performances by the Burgtheater, the Wiener Schauspielhaus, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and the Vienna Boys’ Choir. In the years 2014/2015 the Russian Cultural Season will be organised in Austria.

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the resumption of bilateral relations between Austria and Korea, numerous cultural events were organ-
Objectives and Priorities

ised by both countries. A tour by the Wiener Kammerphilharmonie (Vienna Chamber Philharmonic), conducted by Claudius Traufnfeldner, as well as concerts of the Vienna Boys’ Choir and the renowned pianist Rudolf Buchbinder in Korea were just some of the highlights. A spectacular fashion show of Korean designers was shown at the Weltmuseum in Vienna.

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Austria and Mongolia, the Austrian embassy in Beijing organised a number of cultural events, with a joint gala concert in the cultural palace of Ulan Bator attracting more than 1,000 guests and marking a special highlight of the first part of the festivities. Subsequently, the “Austria Science Days”, a meeting of the Mixed Austro-Mongolian Bilateral Economic Commission, an Austrian-Mongolian Business Forum as well as a seminar on “Extending the cooperation between Mongolia and the EU in regional and global issues” were organised from 8 to 12 July.

A gala event in the presence of Federal President Heinz Fischer was organised on 13 February at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna celebrating 175 years of diplomatic relations between Austria and the USA. At this event, the US Ambassador to Austria, William Eacho, opened the exhibition “175 years of diplomatic relations between Austria and the United States”, which illustrates the history of bilateral relations that have at times been indeed eventful.

Austrian participation in connection with the European Capital of Culture Košice (Slovakia) was of very high artistic quality and included, among other projects, a presentation of the installation TAPE by the award-winning Austro-Croatian trio “numen/for use” and a design exhibition by the University of Applied Sciences – FH Joanneum Graz in the Vojtech-Löffler museum. Further programme highlights were the photographic exhibition “Bau(t)en für die Künste“ (“Building(s) for the arts”) in cooperation with the Office of the Lower Austrian Provincial Government and the presentation of the pavilion “White Noise“ by the SOMA group of architects. In June, the pavilion housed a comprehensive performance review involving 30 Austrian export companies under the heading “AUSTRIAN DESIGN – Surprisingly Ingenious”, which was put together in cooperation with the Austrian Economic Chamber. In autumn, Erwin Wurm participated in the “Triennale zeitgenössischer Kunst” (triennial of contemporary art) contributing the photographic exhibition “One Minute Sculptures”, while the Austrian Cultural Forum Bratislava showed the photographic exhibition “Instructions for Idleness” at the opening of the Cultural Forum’s new location.

In the context of the European Capital of Culture Marseille-Provence, dedicated to “La Méditerranée, le partage des midis, Ulysse, Mémoire et Décolonisation”, the three-part sculpture “Rooms for Rome” by Franz West was presented in front of the Palais des Justice in Aix-en-Provence. Starting in May, the Austrian artist Peter Friedl participated in the international exhibition “Le Pont”, organised by the Musée d’Art Contemporain (MAC, Museum
The exhibition “ici-même” at the city archives of Marseille dealt with the role of Marseilles as city of courageous civil resistance but also of collaboration under the Vichy regime. Starting in autumn it presented documents from the archive’s holdings as well as records, memorabilia and documents that had been made available by private individuals. In September, the Viennese composer Gabriele Proy together with the mozARTE quintet Salzburg inaugurated the newly built academy of music of Aix-en-Provence performing the piano quintet “Lavandula vera”, a piece commissioned by the Austrian Cultural Forum Paris especially for the Capital of Culture Marseille-Provence 2013.

The FMEIA’s new travelling exhibition “mitgebracht-aus Italien bis China” (”Brought from everywhere – from Italy to China”) designed in cooperation with the Province of Salzburg and showing works from young artists who participated in the atelier exchange programme of the Province of Salzburg, was very successfully shown in Tainan/Taiwan and Zagreb. As part of the European Jewish Identity Project, the photographic exhibition “Jude Sein/ Being Jewish“, curated by Peter Rigaud for the Jewish Museum Vienna, was shown – co-funded by the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria – in Vilnius, Warsaw, Strasbourg and Rome.

In the presence of the Executive Councillor for Housing, Housing Construction and Urban Renewal of Vienna, Michael Ludwig, the exhibition “THE VIENNA MODEL – Housing for the 21st Century City”, aimed at sharing the successful concept of social housing in Vienna with the American public, was opened at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York in April.

The “freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL”, a cooperation between the FMEIA and the MuseumsQuartier in Vienna, launched in 2009 to primarily present international exhibitions and projects focusing on fashion, design and digital arts, was continued successfully with the international exhibitions “Run and Dive”, “Faceless Part I” and “Faceless Part II”.

Authors’ readings made up the major part of the activities in the field of literature, with the following authors featuring in the literature promotion programme “schreibART AUSTRIA” playing a most active role: Xaver Bayer, Ann Cotten, Oswald Egger, Brigitta Falkner, Leopold Federmair, Andrea Grill, Sabine Gruber, Maja Haderlap, Angelika Reitzer, Clemens Setz, Thomas Stangl and Gerhild Steinbuch. Numerous other renowned Austrian authors were also invited to participate in reading tours abroad including Barbara Frischmuth, Arno Geiger, Andreas Gruber, Marianne Gruber, Josef Haslinger, Vea Kaiser, Anna Kim, Markus Köhle, Ludwig Laher, Doris Mitterbacher (Mieze Medusa), Robert Menasse, Seher Peherstorfer-Cakir, Julya Rabinowich, Kathrin Röggl, Robert Schindel, Eginald Schlattner, Marlene Streeruwitz, Cornelia Travnicek, Vladimir Vertlib, Anna Weidenholzer and Josef Winkler.

Activities in the theatrical arena included performances of plays by Austrian playwrights and scenic readings of works by Austrian authors, as well
as performances by Austrian theatre companies including Irrwisch, teatro caprile or Wild Theatre (puppet and object theatre) and guest performances by Austrian theatres such as Burgtheater, Schauspielhaus Wien or Theater Nestroyhof Hamakom.

In the priority area of dance, performances by choreographers, dancers and dance companies from Austria including Claudia Bosse, Editta Braun Company, Julia Danzinger, Liquid Loft, The Loose Collective, Willi Dorner, Chris Haring, Ann Juren, An Kaler, Lalish Theaterlabor, Andrea Schlehwein, Superamas and Doris Uhlich were supported at festivals and workshops abroad. A very important role was played in this respect by the innovative funding programme INTPA (Internationales Netz für Tanz und Performance Austria, international network for dance and performance Austria), a cooperation between TanzQuartier Wien, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the FMEIA.

In the field of music, support for Austrian music of the 20th and 21st centuries continues to be a strong feature of cultural programmes. The objective is to present “Austria, the country of music” in an innovative and dynamic manner abroad. The network of Austrian international culture thus supports musical presentations that cover the whole range from classical music through to jazz, pop, world music and experimental approaches (electronic, sound installations). Support was especially provided to musicians that had been selected for The New Austrian Sound of Music (NASOM) support programme for young Austrian soloists and ensembles, with its first edition launched in 2005.

In the field of film, the participation of Austrian films in European and international festivals was provided with ongoing logistical as well as financial support. Due to the ongoing high level of interest since it was launched in 2011, the cooperation with Ars Electronica Linz in the field of animation film was continued. In cooperation with the Österreichische Akademie des Films (Austrian Academy of Film) selected short films were presented as “Österreichische Kurzfilmschau” (Austrian short film show) at embassies and Cultural Fora abroad. With 44 presentations in ten different countries, the “Österreichische Kurzfilmschau” managed to provide both a platform for focussed presentation of Austria as a whole and individual events for showcasing the work of young Austrian filmmakers. In response to the very positive feedback, this cooperation is being continued. At the same time a new cooperation was launched in the field of animation films produced by women. In collaboration with the international film festival “Tricky Women” in Vienna – the only film festival worldwide exclusively dedicated to animation films produced by women – a number of selected animation films by female Austrian filmmakers were presented abroad. This programme aims to enhance the gender balance in the film industry by taking and encouraging steps to be taken towards the realisation of this objective.
The **International Cultural Meeting (Auslandskulturtagung) 2013** was held in the Kuppelsaal of the Vienna University of Technology under the title “**Wenn Wissenschaft und Kunst einander begegnen**” (“When science and art meet”). Among the speakers and panellists were the Minister of Science, Karlheinz Töchterle, the President of the European Research Council, Helga Nowotny, artist Peter Weibel, scientist Anton Zeilinger, Belgian concept artist Koen Vanmechelen and Russian museum director Daria Parkhomenko. The afternoon programme was dedicated to the presentation of Austria’s current international cultural policy priorities and funding programmes and offered the opportunity for personal encounters and exchanges between artists, scientists and representatives of the Austrian international cultural policy network.

Furthermore, the publication **Austria Kultur International. Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Auslandskultur 2012** (Austria culture international. Yearbook of Austrian international culture 2012), which provides a comprehensive overview of Austrian international cultural activities in 2012, was presented at the International Cultural Meeting. Alongside contributions by colleagues from within the Austrian international cultural policy network who write about their personal experiences and methods and/or describe local challenges and outstanding projects, four artists, one author, two musicians and one actor, screenwriter and director who were all on several occasions presented abroad in 2012, share their individual points of view and respective experiences.

In order to support innovative cultural projects and to promote awareness of foreign policy and international cultural policy objectives among a broader public, **funding** is made available for cultural projects in Austria and abroad. A sum of 430,000 euros was thus provided for a total of 91 projects in the fields of arts, culture and science. The following provides just a brief selection representing the wide range of projects supported in this context:

In the film sector funding was provided inter alia to the human rights film festival “This human world”, the “LET’S CEE Filmfestival”, the “EU XXL Film Forum” and the short film festival “espressofilm” in Vienna as well as the “Crossing Europe Filmfestival” in Linz. Funding for **meetings and conferences** was granted inter alia to the international symposium “Im Anschluss … musikalische, künstlerische und pädagogische Strategien der Holocaust-Vermittlung“ (“Im Anschluss … musical, artistic and paedagogic strategies of Holocaust education’”), organised by the association exil.arte, or the international conference “Narratives of Encounters in the North Atlantic Triangle” organised by the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In the field of **dance**, support was provided to the project INTPA (Internationales Netz für Tanz und Performance Austria, international newtork for dance and performance Austria), a cooperation between the FMEIA, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and TanzQuartier Wien. As in previous years, financial support was again granted to various cultural associations and cul-
tural institutions in Austria and abroad as well as to numerous publications through the co-funding of printing costs. Funds were also made available for commemorative trips to Holocaust sites, for example by the Austrian Trade Union Youth or the IM-MER association. In the musical sector, auditions and tours abroad of the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra as well as performances abroad by the Vienna Jeunesse Orchestra were supported. A number of theatre projects including “Die Besten aus dem Osten, Folge 12: Albania (The best from the East, sequel 12: Albania) at the Vienna Volkstheater and the guest performance “Der Kaiser von Atlantis” (the Emperor of Atlantis) by the Vienna-based Schlüterwerke ensemble were granted funding.

On 15 and 16 June, the Working Group on Culture at the European Forum Wachau in Stift Göttweig focused on the motto of “More Europe Through more Culture: The Role of Culture in European Integration and in EU External Relations”, thus addressing a topic of increasing relevance.

Austria has been a member of the Council of Europe’s Enlarged Partial Agreement on European Cultural Routes since 2010. The EC, the CoR, the EP and the Member States agreed to intensify the promotion of the European Cultural Routes as well as their sustainable development and focus on quality in order to strengthen the tourism industry’s competitiveness. As one of the first major events during its Presidency of the Council of Europe, Austria hosted the Annual Consultative Forum of the CoR’s Cultural Routes programme in the Hofburg in Innsbruck from 21 to 22 November. The event, organised on the FMEIA’s initiative together with the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and the CoR’s Institute of Cultural Routes was very positively received. Currently, four cultural routes have been certified in Austria (the Mozart Route, the Transromanica, the European Cemeteries Route and the Art Noveau Route).

14.2. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science

With a view to the forthcoming Austrian-Russian Cultural Seasons, bilateral preparatory meetings and cultural consultations on a Memorandum of Understanding were held in Vienna at the end of January. During his visit to Austria in June, the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cultural Cooperation, Mikhail Shvydkoy and the Deputy Minister of Culture of the Russia Federation Alla Manilova, as well as the Secretary-General at the FMEIA Ambassador Johannes Kyrle signed the “Common Memorandum of Understanding on the Austrian-Russian Cultural Seasons 2013–2015”. This cultural exchange project covers a period of three years. It started with the “Austrian Cultural Season in Russia 2013–2014”, which realises all in all 50 projects in 17 cities between May 2013 and December 2014. The responsibility for the programme and its implementation lies with the Austrian Cultural Forum in Moscow, sup-
supported by the FMEIA, the Austrian Embassy in Moscow as well as the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and a number of Austrian and Russian entrepreneurs.

The new work programme 2013–2014 was adopted at the 5th meeting of the Austrian-Slovak Joint Committee for Scientific and Technological Co-operation held in Bratislava on 17 January. A total of 16 research projects were selected based on their scientific relevance, gender considerations and aspects relating to the promotion of young scientists.

On 15 March, the Austrian-Bulgarian Joint Committee for Scientific and Technological Co-operation met for the first time in 15 years. Agreement was reached on realising seven joint scientific-technological projects between 2013 and 2015.

In implementing the agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Russian Federation on Scientific-Technological Co-operation that entered into force in 2012, the Austrian-Russian Joint Commission met for the first time in Vienna on 21 March. Agreement was reached on adopting the Scientific-Technological Work Programme prior to the Commission’s next meeting.

During a working visit in March paid to his Brazilian counterpart Marco Antonio Raupp, Minister of Science Karlheinz Töchterle signed a framework agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil on Cooperation in the Fields of Education and Higher Education. The agreement governs cooperation between institutions in the fields of education and tertiary education, research and science and provides for the establishment of a Joint Commission tasked with defining a Work Programme. Brazil launched a comprehensive scholarship programme under the heading of “Science without Borders” towards enabling and facilitating graduate and postgraduate studies abroad by Brazilian students, academics and scientists. Brazil also considers Austrian universities highly interesting target institutions. Austrian universities are in turn interested in accepting Brazilian students and/or academics in the fields of natural sciences and technology.

Negotiations during the 4th meeting of the Austrian-Slovak Joint Commission were successful. The Commission discussed and adopted a Work Programme for the years 2013–2018. Thanks to the programme “Aktion Österreich-Slowakei, Zusammenarbeit in Wissenschaft und Erziehung” (action Austria-Slovakia, cooperation in science and education), established in 1992, scientific relations between the two countries have intensified significantly. The Commission therefore decided to continue the action programme until 31 December 2019.

At the Austrian-Rumanian cultural negotiations in Bucharest on 26 and 27 September, a bilateral programme was adopted on Cooperation in the Fields of Education, Culture, Youth and Sports for the years 2013–2017.
The traditional **Austrian-Swiss Cultural Consultations** held in Vienna on 30 and 31 October again took place in an open and friendly atmosphere.

At its meeting in Vienna on 4 December, the **Austrian-Romanian Joint Commission for Scientific and Technological Cooperation** agreed on 21 research projects for the next two years.

The 3rd meeting of the **Austrian-Slovenian Joint Cultural Commission** was held in Vienna on 16 and 17 December. A new Cultural Work Programme was adopted for the years 2014–2016 covering a wide range of joint activities in the fields of education; language; teacher education, training and advanced training; scientific cooperation; culture; arts; youth and sports. The new bilateral programme attaches particular importance to cross-border cooperation in the educational sector and the joint promotion of contemporary artistic creativity. Another key aspect is regional cooperation in the educational sector under the Central European Cooperation in Education and Training (CECE), particularly in the fields of teacher education, vocational education and life-long learning. Other priorities include joint activities aimed at promoting literature and successful translation programmes in both countries. In the last few years, a total of 70 works from Austrian and Slovenian authors were translated into Slovenian and German. Successful cooperation between Austrian and Slovenian publishing houses, translation projects, mobility programmes for authors and various forms of presenting modern literature from both states are to be continued. Enhanced collaboration is envisaged for the film industry including co-productions. Both parties highlighted the importance of **promoting cultural diversity and protecting as well as supporting the Slovenian ethnic group in Austria** (including individuals who speak Slovenian and reside outside of the Slovenian minority’s main settlement area) and likewise of the German-speaking ethnic group in Slovenia.

Partner countries are still very much interested in concluding new agreements on cultural and scientific-technological cooperation. Currently written negotiations on the signing of cultural agreements are ongoing with Bulgaria and Ukraine.

### 14.3. Austria Libraries

Over the last 20 years, the Austria Libraries (Österreich-Bibliotheken) abroad have evolved into well-established **platforms of inter-cultural dialogue**. Set up in 1989, they have made a special contribution to overcoming the intellectual and mentality-related division of Europe into East and West. Austria Libraries are primarily located in Central, Eastern and South-East Europe, the Caucasus, the Black Sea region and Central Asia.

Institutionally linked to universities and national libraries, the Austria Libraries are popular among students, teaching staff and academics and are also used by interested members of the public. Alongside their role as
Austria’s **scientific satellites** abroad, they are increasingly developing into **information and cultural centres** that organise cultural and scientific events in cooperation with the local cultural fora and embassies. Being an indispensable and integral element of Austrian international cultural policy they provide important and sustainable impetus that goes beyond their Central European scope, fostering the sharing of Austrian culture, philosophy and arts as well as promoting multifaceted bilateral and multilateral cultural and scientific relations.

The network of Austria Libraries abroad currently consists of **62 libraries in 28 countries** and registered more than **144,000 visitors** in 2013. The libraries’ stocks comprise some **400,000 books**, more than **4,500 audio items**, **2,263 CDROMs**, **3,268 videos** and **4,329 DVDs**. Besides providing traditional library services, the Austria Libraries organised some **900 events** that attracted more than **133,000 visitors**.

Accessible via the Austria Libraries’ web portal (www.oesterreich-bibliotheken.at), the database of Austrian literature already includes more than 18,277 foreign language translations of Austrian literature (international austriaca) including those accessible via databases in Japan, Russia and Italy. The translations produced in the context of Austria Libraries frequently win translation awards sponsored by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture and often receive distinctions in the respective host countries.

The Austria Libraries at the Departments for German Studies abroad are often managed by lecturers of the Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research (Österreichischer Austauschdienst, OeAD), who are highly valued by the heads of Austria Libraries as competent networkers in matters relating to Austrian cultural, educational and scientific activities. Facilities which house Austria Libraries also award the Austrian German Language Diploma (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch, ÖSD) and conduct the relevant exams.

In long-standing and successful cooperation with the “culture and language” department at the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, **Austria Days** were organised at selected locations abroad. These events, which were conducted in close cooperation with local institutions such as local German teachers’ associations, focused on topics that relate specifically to Austria. Programme design and organisation was in the hands of the “culture and language” department and the local cooperation partner. These short seminars are also conceived as further education opportunities for German teachers abroad.

Austria Libraries organise cultural events, teach languages and contribute towards facilitating the diverse cultural and scientific relations in both the bilateral and the multilateral context. The FMEIA attaches great importance to promoting **networking** among Austria Libraries and ongoing professional training. To this end regular meetings are organised. Since 2009, publications
produced in the context of the Austria Libraries network have been published in the series on “Transkulturelle Forschungen an den Österreich-Bibliotheken im Ausland” (trans-cultural research at Austria Libraries abroad). A board composed of renowned Austrian editors supervises this series of scientific works published by the Austria Libraries.

In the context of the 5th Biennial Meeting under the heading of “Opportunities of Cultural Networks” that brought together heads, staff and scientific advisors from Austria Libraries abroad at the Austrian Academy of Sciences on 5 November, volumes 7 to 10 of the series “Transkulturelle Forschungen an den Österreich-Bibliotheken im Ausland” were presented. Volume 7 is entitled “Die Pariser Vororte-Verträge im Spiegel der Öffentlichkeit”, and edited by Harald Gröller (Vienna), Harald Heppner (Graz); volume 8 on “Pluralität als kulturelle Lebensform: Österreich und die Nationalkulturen Südosteuropas”, edited by Harald Haslmayr (Graz), Andrei Corbea-Hoisie (Iasi, Romania); volume 9 bears the title “Medialisierung des Zerfalls der Doppelmonarchie in deutschsprachigen Regionalperiodika zwischen 1880 und 1914”, edited by Zoltán Szendi (Pécs, Hungary); volume 10 is entitled “Grenzüberquerungen und Migrationsbewegungen. Fremdheits- und Integrationserfahrungen in der österreichischen, deutschen, schweizerischen und polnischen Literatur und Lebenswelt”, edited by Gabriella Jelitto-Piechulik (Opole, Poland), Malgorzata Jokiel (Opole), Monika Wójcik-Bednarz (Opole).

In the series of publications edited by Rudolf Agstner (Vienna) and entitled “Forschungen zur Geschichte des österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes” (research on the history of the Austrian Foreign Service), (LIT publishing house) volume 8 on “1914. Das etwas andere Lesebuch zum 1. Weltkrieg. Unbekannte Dokumente der österreichisch-ungarischen Diplomatie” was published in 2013.

This year the Austria Libraries again contributed to the campaign “Österreich liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek” (Austria reads. Meeting point library), which attracted more than half a million of visitors in Austria and abroad – and is also very popular and highly appreciated by co-organisers.

Gala events, symposia, series of lectures, exhibitions and concerts were organised in connection with the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Austria Libraries in Opole (Poland) and Debrecen (Hungary). On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of its establishment the Austria Library in Cluj-Napoca (Romania) was named “Österreich-Bibliothek Bernhard Stillfried”.

The new lecture rooms in the Sokrates Building and in the Austria library at the Pavol-Jozef-Šafárik University in Košice (Slovakia) were inaugurated at the beginning of the academic year 2013/2014.

On the occasion of the EU accession of the Republic of Croatia and as a sign of Austria’s special attachment to Croatia, an Austria Library was established at the University of Zadar on 1 July. This is the 62nd Austria Library
worldwide and – after Osijek and Rijeka – the third location in Croatia. It was named after the great European and friend of Croatia, former Austrian Vice Chancellor and Foreign Minister Alois Mock, who like almost no other foreign politician at the time supported the independence of Croatia and its European integration. The opening was at the same time the highlight of a twelve-part cultural framework programme with events throughout Croatia organised by the Austrian Cultural Forum and the Austrian Embassy in Zagreb in celebration of Croatia’s accession to the EU.

Book donations were granted to Austria Libraries abroad and to German language and social science institutes at universities around the world especially with a focus on Austrian humanities, inter alia in Finland, Ireland, Japan, Poland and South Africa.


14.4.1. Austria Professorships and Centres of Austrian Studies Abroad

Established at universities mainly in Europe, the USA and Israel, these facilities aim to initiate, deepen and coordinate the study of Austria- and Europespecific topics in the respective host country’s academic life and to stimulate academic research in this subject area as well as encourage publication of the relevant findings. Regular collaboration with embassies, consulates general and Cultural Fora contributes substantially towards enabling chairs and centres for Austrian studies to fulfil their tasks. Through networking with the relevant local and Austrian institutions, the Austrian chairs also strengthen Austria’s involvement in the international scientific, academic and cultural network.

14.4.2. Scholarships and Mobility Programmes in the University Field

The OeAD-GmbH provides services to scholarship and grant holders and administers the various mobility programmes such as Erasmus, bilateral grant programmes, Austrian Development Cooperation programmes and scientific and technical cooperation programmes. In implementing these tasks, the OeAD-GmbH acts as the partner of the FMEIA, which is in turn responsible for relevant coordination and information sharing activities involving Austrian representations abroad and foreign representations in Austria.

14.4.3. Offices of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA)

The Offices of Science and Technology Austria (OSTA) in Washington D.C. and in Beijing market Austria as a technology location and are the prime con-
tact for maintaining and expanding relations between Austria and the USA, Canada, and China in the field of research and technology development. The OSTAs were designed as strategic interfaces and hubs for the exchange of information in the fields of science, research, tertiary education and technology policy. They cooperate closely with Austrian ministries and research institutions as well as with their associated research, science and technology organisations such as the Austrian Institute of Technology, the Österreichische Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (Austrian Research Promotion Agency), Austria Wirtschaftsservice (the Austrian federal promotional bank), Wissenschaftsfonds (the Austrian Science Fund), Österreichischer Austauschdienst (Austrian Agency for International Cooperation in Education and Research), AustriaTech and the international offices of the Austrian Economic Chamber. The OSTAs also provide support and advice for initiating and handling new scientific-technical and scientific-technological cooperation, assist in deepening existing bilateral research and technology cooperation and also support and advise students, researchers and scientists.

14.4.4. 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 German courses on an independent basis. These courses, which are an important element of Austria’s international cultural policy, had up to that time been offered at the Austrian Cultural Institutes. Based in Vienna, the organisation maintains institutes in Belgrade, Bratislava, Brno, Budapest, Krakow, Ljubljana, Rome, Warsaw and Wroclaw. All of the Österreich Institut facilities see themselves as centres for the promotion of the study and cultivation of the German language as it is written and spoken in Austria.

The Austrian German Language Diploma (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch, ÖSD) is an examination system for German as a foreign and second language and is aimed at adolescent and adult German students both in Austria and abroad. 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.

Lecturers and German as a Foreign Language (GFL) trainee teachers are selected and advised by the OeAD-GmbH in cooperation with the Department of German as a Foreign Language at the University of Vienna. In the reporting period lecturers worked in some 120 locations and trainee teachers in some 45 countries. Under the language assistance programme operated by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, language assistants are currently active in nine countries.
14.4.5. Educational Networks and Austrian Schools Abroad

Currently there are eight Austrian Schools Abroad: two in Budapest, one each in Prague, Istanbul, Guatemala City, Shkodra, Querétaro and Liechtenstein. These schools were created based on historical, economic policy and cultural policy considerations. Lessons at these schools are based on the Austrian curriculum in combination with relevant adaptations to the respective host country.

Project work by the officer for cooperation in the field of education at the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture helps to ensure relevant reforms are supported in East and South East Europe.

14.5. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation

Austria has continued to place a special focus on multilateral scientific and technical cooperation both inside and outside of Europe in order to strengthen its position 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 Organisation 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. Austria is represented in these organisations by the FMEIA, the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. In addition, Austria’s foreign policy interests 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 (United Kingdom) as well as the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) in Vienna.

In this context, efforts aimed at fostering the coordination of activities launched by international scientific institutions headquartered in Austria play a particularly important role. Since 1971, Austria has been a member of COST whose 35 member countries (and Israel as a cooperating state) are engaged in scientific and technical cooperation in the field of pre-competitive research with a special focus being placed on natural sciences such as chemistry, nano-sciences and interdisciplinary research. Austria attaches particular importance to promoting third-country participation. Funding is also provided for a dedicated COST Fund, established to enable the participation of scientists and researchers from the Western Balkan countries. Austria also contributes to the European Space Agency (ESA), whose convention enables selective participation in ESA programmes with a guaranteed return on investment. Participation in these ESA programmes provides an excellent launching pad for industrial production geared towards commercial appli-

According to Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), competence for cultural policy lies exclusively with the Member States. The EU is only assigned a supportive and coordinating role in order to promote cooperation among Member States in this field. In this context, the current EU Work Plan for Culture (2011–2014) explicitly mentions the promotion of cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue as well as culture in the Union’s external relations as priority areas.

Culture is indeed playing an increasingly relevant role in the EU’s external relations. This was inter alia reflected in the formulation of the EC’s negotiation mandate for the planned free trade agreement between the EU and the USA (Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership). A key item on the discussions’ agenda was the question of whether cultural services, especially in the film industry can in fact be the subject of negotiations under a free trade agreement with the EU.

Likewise, at the Culture Ministers Council on 17 May an in-depth discussion also focused on cultural diversity in the context of the agreement between the EU and the USA. In a public orientation debate, the Council for the first time discussed the use of culture as a possible “soft” policy field in the context of EU external relations and deliberated possible concrete steps towards implementation.

Under the Lithuanian Presidency, the informal meeting of senior officials of Ministries of Culture and senior officials responsible for Culture in Ministries of Foreign Affairs convened annually since 2010, was held in Vilnius from 16 to 17 October 16 to 17. The central topic at the meeting was the role of culture in EU external relations in the context of neighbourhood policy.

The first meeting of the EU-Korea Cultural Cooperation Committee was held in Brussels on 5 December. The Committee was established based on the Protocol on Cultural Cooperation between the EU and Korea, which forms part of the Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Korea. The EU considers the former an implementation instrument of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression of 2005.

The FMEIA’s international cultural policy activities in the EU context are based on the current Austrian international cultural policy concept under...
which “Austria’s contribution to the further development of European integration” is one of three explicit objectives.

Austria, in keeping with the dual role of culture in the EU, contributes with its international cultural policy activities to EU cultural initiatives that strengthen a common EU awareness. The Austrian representations abroad cooperate closely and on a regular basis with the representations of other EU Member States and EU delegations.

Of the 31 Austrian Cultural Fora 14 are active in the EU and the same holds true for 36 of the 62 Austria Libraries and for eight of the ten Austria Institutes worldwide. Within the European Union, they work pro-actively towards promoting cultural exchange, European multi-lingualism, and especially the German language as it is spoken and written in Austria. They also foster career opportunities of Austrian artists on the European arts and culture market, which is of particular importance to the former.

The network of European National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) is another form of cooperation at a cultural level. Founded in 2007 as an informal network, it was constituted as an association with relevant articles in 2011. Currently, 31 Institutes for Culture from 26 EU Member States belong to EUNIC. Worldwide, more than 88 EUNIC clusters have formed as cooperation networks between local EU cultural institutes. Five of these clusters are chaired by the heads of Austrian Cultural Fora and/or embassies. In 2013, EUNIC’s activities focused particularly on the Fifth Intercultural Dialogue held with China in Xi’an from 16 to 19 October, and the continuation of a regional project dealing with socio-political developments in the Mediterranean region outside of Europe.

14.7. Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

The internal European and global developments of the past few years have underlined the necessity for dialogue among and with the major world religions – as first initiated by Austria some three decades ago. At the same time, it has become evident that dialogue strategies must go far beyond promoting dialogue on theological tenets; indeed they must encompass issues spanning the spectrum from migration to integration including the central political challenges of democracy, the rule of law, respect of fundamental rights and freedoms as well as promotion of societal and cultural diversity. This makes dialogue an important tool for diversity management and sustainable prevention and resolution of conflicts.

Austria is thus interested in a comprehensive dialogue of cultures and religions, especially in connection with the growth of the Muslim community in Europe and the quest for a European expression of Islam. In dialogues with predominantly Muslim societies, particularly in Asia, the Arab world and Turkey, special attention is paid to a greater involvement of women, their
Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

direct participation in societal and political life as well as the inclusion of young people in dialogue.

From 26 to 28 February, Vienna was the venue of the 5th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) that focused on “the promotion of responsible leadership in diversity and dialogue”. More than 1,500 representatives from governments, international organisations, NGOs, the media and commercial companies met in order to elaborate solutions for today’s inter-cultural challenges, discuss future developments and contribute to shaping the future of the Alliance. Deliberations focused on freedom of religion, freedom of the media, migration and integration. It is noteworthy that the forum entailed an immediate and far-reaching strengthening of cultural and religious dialogue. The most important political outcome document is the Vienna Declaration which was unanimously adopted by all 136 members of the Alliance. This key document, inter alia, underlines the important role played by intercultural and interreligious dialogue in promoting tolerance, pluralism and mutual respect.

The Forum’s first day was dedicated to young people. Some 150 young people from 94 states who had been selected by an independent jury met for the traditional Youth Event held before the main forum, in which they subsequently also participated. In a total of 18 workshops, they dealt with the topics addressed at the conference and prepared recommendations which were presented at the closing event.

As in the previous year, applied geography and culture training events were organised in 2013 for voluntary women’s representatives in Austrian mosque associations (27 September to 4 October) and for dialogue officers for intercultural and interreligious cooperation (30 November to 6 December). These seminars were organised in cooperation with the Islamic Faith Community in Austria, whose President Fuat Sanac participated in the closing event and the diploma award ceremony on 6 December.

In 2013, the FMEIA provided substantial support to the International King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID), which opened in 2012 in Vienna. The centre aims to provide a permanent platform for dialogue among representatives of religious communities and philosophies. It strives to develop and/or support communication, understanding and concrete cooperation between people of different cultural and religious background and affiliation by hosting and organising conferences, seminars and further training projects. The centre is committed to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the promotion and respect of fundamental rights and freedoms.

Under the heading of “The Image of the Other: interreligious and intercultural education”, the first major conference was successfully conducted on 18 and 19 November. This conference marked an important step towards
reaching the goal of deepening relations based on mutual respect between believers of different faiths through genuine dialogue.

14.8. International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and Issues related to the National Socialist Past

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), an international Institution with a Permanent Secretariat based in Berlin, was set up in 1998 on the initiative of Sweden under the name of Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF). It was established with the purpose of becoming an international network promoting Holocaust education, remembrance and research at national and international level. In accomplishing its tasks it is able to draw on the support of renowned international scientific experts. By establishing its committee on countering anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial and by placing an additional focus on Roma, the ITF has responded to current developments. Influential diplomacy used by both the Chair and the ITF Member States – which have increased to 31 following the admission of Slovenia, Ireland and Serbia – is playing an increasingly important role in countering revisionism. Admitted in 2001, Austria held the ITF Chair in the commemorative year of 2008 and has since been one of the central players within the Alliance. The reform initiatives launched by the Austrian Chair were also continued by the Canadian Chair in 2013. At the autumn plenary meeting held in Toronto (7 to 10 October), the Alliance’s rules of procedure that had been prepared under Austrian chairmanship were adopted by consensus. Along with four other country reports, the Austrian country report was also presented and discussed. The report described the activities Austria had launched and implemented over the last few years with respect to Holocaust education, remembrance and research, including teaching material, registration of victims, and the opening of the renovated Mauthausen memorial site.

The Austrian delegation is co-headed by the FMEIA and the National Fund of the Republic of Austria. Austrian government representatives 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. Projects launched by Austria in the fields of Holocaust education, awareness-raising and research are highly regarded within the IHRA.

14.9. The Future Fund of the Republic of Austria

The Future Fund of the Republic of Austria was set up at the end of 2005 as a diminishing fund assuming the residual funds of the Fund for Reconcilia-
The Future Fund of the Republic of Austria

tion, Peace and Cooperation (Reconciliation Fund) that had been established in 2000 and was closed on 31 December 2005. The fund’s mandate covers the promotion of projects and academic work which serve the remembrance of the victims of the Nazi regime, as a reminder of the threat posed by totalitarian systems and dictatorships or international cooperation and promote the respect of human rights and mutual tolerance in these areas. The Fund’s mandate to administer the residual funds and final settlement of the remaining payments expired at the end of 2010.

The FMEIA provides technical and administrative support to the Future Fund. In a large number of the international projects supported by the Fund, the FMEIA and its respective diplomatic representations cooperate closely with the Fund. Such projects include, for example, the re-design of the exhibition at the Austrian memorial site in the former concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau, the education initiative on Holocaust and genocide prevention launched by the Salzburg Global Seminar and collaboration in the context of the 5th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC). In the reporting period, cooperation also included training courses for master degree students from Israel, Palestine and Jordan that were organised by the Diplomatic Academy. The “workshop talks”, organised in cooperation with the Diplomatic Academy to present selected projects funded by the Future Fund, were continued.
15. Media and Information

15.1. Press Work

Keeping the public informed about European issues, crises, international policy developments and consular assistance for Austrians in need abroad is one of the FMEIA’s key tasks. At peak times, the Ministry’s staff thus handle more than 100 media enquiries a day, providing information via electronic, print or other media.

In order to ensure optimal service for journalists representing national and international media, the FMEIA not only organises press conferences but also holds a number of background information briefings on important issues. Staff also provide support and services to media representatives at international conferences and other events.

15.2. PR, New Media and Web Presence

As in many other areas, social media have come to play an important role in the field of foreign policy. On the one hand, they may be used as a tool to present one’s own work and to communicate content quickly – and on the other hand to reach out to increasingly wider groups of the population by opening up new channels for discussion and dialogue. Nowadays, social media need to be actively integrated in modern and professional PR activities. Pro-active presence and involvement on the web and in social media are thus a necessary continuation and logical consequence of the FMEIA’s philosophy that service to Austrian citizens is one of the Ministry’s central tasks (in line with its motto “Worldwide at Your Service”).

While the FMEIA is already playing a pioneering role in using social media within public administration, it is clear that efforts in this area will have to be stepped up even further. First steps taken in this direction include, for instance, the opening of a Twitter account (with more than 5,000 followers to date), the YouTube channel, and the FMEIA smartphone app “Auslandsservice”. Since 2012, the FMEIA has also been on Facebook providing insights into the Ministry’s work to a broader audience. The Facebook page is an ideal complement to the FMEIA’s established online presence, which is also confirmed by the interaction with this social media platform and the regular enquiries received through it. The online range of services was further expanded by the “Reiseregistrierung“ (travel registration) system under which travellers can register with the FMEIA so to be easily reached and provided with quick and easy-to-follow information should the need arise (in case of political upheaval, natural disaster, etc.).

Generally speaking, the FMEIA’s websites are, however, still used as the main source of information. Apart from its homepage, the Ministry’s web presence comprises more than 100 websites of Austrian representations that
are operated on the same technical platform. In 2013, the FMEIA’s website “www.bmeia.gv.at” alone registered some 3 million visits and 6.5 million clicks. The most frequently visited pages provide travel information and contact details of Austrian representations abroad and foreign representations in Austria.

15.3. Information about Europe: “DARUM EUROPA” Information Roadshow

In the context of the FMEIA’s “DARUM EUROPA” information roadshow, State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka set out on a “Europe Information Tour” starting in Vienna on 21 November 2012. On this tour, he visited all nine federal provinces, introduced himself as primary point of contact for all EU questions and engaged in an open dialogue on Austria and the EU. These events were intended in particular to provide employees with the opportunity of engaging in direct contact with the State Secretary and to ask questions about Europe and current European policy developments. Following the kick-off, a total of 28 discussion events were held inter alia in Graz, Linz, Innsbruck, Saalfelden, Hohenems, Pinkafeld, Kühnsdorf and Gumpoldskirchen. The tour ended in Vienna on 27 June.

Two panel discussions were organised in the context of the “DARUM EUROPA” information roadshow: one on 7 May in cooperation with the daily newspaper KURIER in the Vienna Hofburg on the topic of “Europa – USA: Neue alte Freunde?” (Europe-USA: New old Friends?) involving Vice Chancellor Michael Spindelegger and former German Minister of Defence Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg. The other panel discussion was held on 13 May in the Haus der Europäischen Union (House of the European Union) in Vienna, where Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger and Belgian Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Didier Reynders discussed potential opportunities for further EU development under the heading of “European Union – The Way Forward”.

Another source of EU-related information the interested public may turn to is the FMEIA’s website, which not only provides the latest updated information on the EU but also brief videos in which Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger and State Secretary Lopatka regularly summarise the voting behaviour in and the decisions taken by the Foreign Affairs and the General Affairs Councils.

In 2013, the FMEIA also pro-actively contributed to EU information events in connection with the European Year of Citizens. The travelling exhibition “Die EU und DU – eine Erfolgsgeschichte mit Zukunft” (“the EU and YOU – a success story with a future”) that was jointly developed by the European Commission Representation in Austria, the Austrian Society for European Policy and the FMEIA, met with particular interest. This exhibition
has been touring schools all across Austria since 2008 and provides pupils with the opportunity to engage in a discussion on the exhibition content and on current European integration issues. This year it was shown at 27 schools, reaching more than 2,580 pupils. During visits by school classes to the FMEIA, pupils also had the opportunity to seek information on current EU topics directly from Ministry experts.

FMEIA staff regularly participated as guest speakers at EU information events. Information on the EU was again a key topic at the Open House event that is traditionally hosted by the FMEIA on 26 October, Austrian National Day. Staff at information desks answered questions on the EU, and visitors were invited to learn more about current European integration issues such as Croatia’s accession as the 28th Member State. In addition to the information provided at the desks, an exhibition featured original documents on Austria’s EU accession.

15.4. The “Municipal Councillors for European Affairs”

The initiative “Europa fängt in den Gemeinden an” (“Europe starts at local level”), was launched at the beginning of 2010 by Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger and the European Commission Representation in Austria. The initiative aims to establish mayors and/municipal councillors as “Municipal Councillors for European Affairs” in as many cities and municipalities as possible. They will then act as the local population’s main contact partners on topics related to the EU. By the end of the year, more than 600 mayors and municipal councillors across all federal provinces and political parties had already joined the initiative.

The FMEIA acts as a central information, contact and service point Municipal Councillors for European Affairs can turn to for quick and unbureaucratic answers. The range of services provided by the Ministry to Municipal Councillors for European Affairs also includes an email information system they can access for concise facts on current EU issues, an electronic EU information platform enabling Municipal Councillors for European Affairs to network with one another, EU training seminars for initiative members lasting several days and information trips to Brussels. From 23 to 25 January and from 16 to 18 October, 25 Municipal Councillors for European Affairs each participated in what were the fourth and fifth such information trips to Brussels.

On 7 October, a seminar on “Aktuelle EU Entwicklungen und eine Vorschau auf die Zukunft” (latest developments at EU level and an outlook for the future) was held in cooperation with the Tyrolean Association of Municipalities in Innsbruck. The seminar was aimed at Municipal Councillors for European Affairs and other interested municipal councillors from Tyrol.
15.5. Publications

The FMEIA issues publications on a range of topics aimed at informing the public as comprehensively as possible about its activities. In this context, a special focus is placed on the annual Foreign and European Policy Report, in which the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs informs the Austrian Parliament and the public about all aspects of the FMEIA’s activities and on international and European policy developments during the year under review. This report is published both in a printed format and in an electronic version available on the FMEIA’s website in German and in English. Other publications included the revised and updated edition of “Advice for Travellers Abroad” and the brochure “Das österreichische Außenministerium – Minoritenplatz 8” (The Austrian Foreign Ministry – Minoritenplatz 8).

15.6. Press Officers’ Meeting

Acknowledging the important role played by press and PR work carried out at Austrian representations abroad, the FMEIA organises annual meetings of press and PR officers working at embassies, consulates and cultural fora. The agenda prepared for this year’s event included presentations, a discussion with Austrian print, radio and TV journalists and a special media training seminar on radio interviews with a particular focus being placed on social media.
16. The Austrian Foreign Service

16.1. Introduction

In Austria, the Foreign Service institutions and their staff are governed by the “Statute”\(^4\), passed by parliament in 1999. With 100 representations abroad, the Austrian Foreign Service is, compared with other countries, a lean organisation. With a total of 1,183 staff, the FMEIA is one of the smaller Austrian federal government departments. A high level of staff mobility and the use of modern information and communication technology (ICT) enable the FMEIA to execute its mandate despite limited resources, while further expanding consular services offered abroad. In this context, the FMEIA plays a pioneering role in applying innovative ICT tools. An app introduced in 2013 enables Austrians travelling abroad to register their details so that they can be easily contacted, e.g. in the event of a crisis.

Within Europe as well as overseas, an extensive network of diplomatic and consular missions is a sine qua non for the implementation of Austrian interests. Direct access to decision makers in EU capitals is important for Austria in order to coordinate with its EU partners and gain support for its concerns. A permanent presence in EU Member States and growth regions around the world is also necessary in order to provide support to Austria’s foreign trade initiatives. The positioning of Austria as a reliable partner committed to international solidarity requires adequate representation in international organisations. The added value of a global representation network is particularly apparent in crisis situations requiring rapid consular assistance.

The FMEIA constantly evaluates its representation network with a view to geopolitical changes and efficient use of resources. 2013 saw the opening of a coordination office of the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) in Tbilisi, which implements projects in Georgia and Armenia, two new priority countries of Austrian development cooperation (ADC). The Austrian consulates-general in Krakow and Chicago were closed in 2013, and replaced with honorary consulates.

The Federal Government’s budget consolidation course led to cuts in the FMEIA’s budget for 2013. Of the 402.6 million euros available under the “Bundesfinanzrahmengesetz”, (Federal Medium-Term Budget Framework Act), 77 million euros are earmarked for bilateral development cooperation. It was thus possible to maintain ADC funding at the level of 2012. In order to properly perform all of the FMEIA’s foreign policy and consular tasks, it was necessary to introduce cuts in administrative expenses and in contributions

to international organisations. By observing strict budgetary discipline, the Ministry was able to meet all budgetary targets defined for 2013.

### 16.2. Working at the FMEIA

The mobility principle applied within the FMEIA, with its frequent transfers between headquarters in Vienna and missions abroad, requires a high level of flexibility on the part of staff members and their families. In 2013, some 250 FMEIA staff were transferred to new positions in different cities.

At the end of 2013, the FMEIA employed a total of **1,183 staff**, 569 (48 %) of whom worked at headquarters and 614 (52 %) abroad.

#### Staffing levels at the FMEIA 2013 by career scheme and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career scheme</th>
<th>Men Austria</th>
<th>Men Abroad</th>
<th>Women Austria</th>
<th>Women Abroad</th>
<th>Total Austria/abroad</th>
<th>Share of women in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A1/v1, A/a (diplomatic staff)</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>434</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2/v2, B/b (consular administrative staff)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3/v3, C/c (technical staff)</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4/A5/v4, D/d, (qualified support and office staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7/v5, E/e (auxiliary service staff)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT specialists</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotals Austria/abroad</strong></td>
<td><strong>284</strong></td>
<td><strong>328</strong></td>
<td><strong>285</strong></td>
<td><strong>286</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,183</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.3</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>612</strong></td>
<td><strong>571</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,183</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A total of **709 local employees** (as of 31 Dec. 2013) are employed by the FMEIA at Austrian missions abroad.

The FMEIA complies with the mandatory employment quota for **employees with disabilities** with a total of 45 individuals (as of 31 Dec. 2013).

In the diplomatic service, the **share of female staff** reached **34.8 % in 2013**, making it an area where the Ministry needs to catch up the most.
The total number of FMEIA staff has continuously declined over the last few years. In 2013, a total of 100 employees left the FMEIA either for reasons other than retirement or to take unpaid leave in order to serve, for instance, in the European External Actions Service (EEAS) or at the United Nations. These employee departures were, however, only partially offset by newly hired employees.

Applicants for jobs at the FMEIA must undergo specific selection procedures. The FMEIA attaches utmost importance to comprehensive staff training for consular work, crisis management as well as the use of information technologies, and in 2013 stepped up mid-career training, including seminars for future heads of missions.

Young university graduates and students are offered the opportunity to take up traineeships in Austria and at missions abroad. In 2013, a total of 287 trainees made use of this opportunity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2013</th>
<th>Career scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>v1/v2</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>v1/v2</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2013, the average retirement age of public officials at the FMEIA was 62.14 years (women: 60 years, men: 62.76 years). Over the last ten years, the average retirement age has always exceeded 60 years.
The Foreign Ministry’s Budget

16.3. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget

The 2013 budget for the FMEIA was set at 402.7 million euros with 66.2 million euros budgeted for head office expenses, 162.1 million euros for the network of missions abroad, 6.4 million euros for cultural projects, 84.3 million euros for international organisations and 82 million euros for the Austrian Development Agency GmbH and the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund.

### Budget 2004–2013 in million euros

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FMEIA budget</th>
<th>Share of FMEIA budget in federal budget in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>340.928</td>
<td>0.54 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>380.000</td>
<td>0.59 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>388.000</td>
<td>0.59 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>388.109</td>
<td>0.56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>388.087</td>
<td>0.56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>435.675</td>
<td>0.56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>440.902</td>
<td>0.62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>427.100</td>
<td>0.61 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>409.361</td>
<td>0.56 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>402.654</td>
<td>0.54 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 2013, the preparation of the Federal Government’s first consolidated financial statement was completed, which lists and values all real estate and inventory assets owned by the Republic of Austria worldwide.

16.4. Worldwide Infrastructure

16.4.1. Real Estate Management and Construction Projects

The FMEIA’s real estate portfolio contains some 350 properties used as embassy facilities, consulates, cultural institutes and residential properties. Just over half of these are owned by the Republic of Austria, the rest is either rented or leased. Based on a Facility Management Strategy, a team of in-house specialists is working on the purchase and sale of real estate, construction projects, adaptations, renovations and refurbishments. Major attention is paid to energy efficiency and ecological aspects. In Bangkok and Zagreb, two “passive house standard” buildings are being built. As of 2015, they will serve as a model of modern and sustainable architecture, acting as a visual expression of Austria’s brand identity.

The FMEIA increasingly seeks co-locations or shared premises – both with other Austrian institutions and other European countries in order to improve the use of the available space and to achieve synergies.

16.4.2. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The FMEIA continuously invests in new ICT solutions in order to improve administrative efficiency and communication but also to generate savings. In 2013, the MOVE-IT system, designed by the FMEIA for its missions abroad, was introduced.

At the beginning of the summer travel season the FMEIA launched an online registration service for Austrians who travel abroad. Travellers can register personal data, information about the trip as well as contact details. If necessary, registered individuals can thus be contacted without further delay. This tool was well received, especially by people who travel to crisis regions. More than 12,000 individuals registered in the first months.

The online-registration of Austrians living permanently abroad was also launched in 2013. Until December 2013, more than 3,000 Austrians living abroad had registered.

The worldwide implementation of the Schengen “Visa Information System” (VIS) – for the collection of biometrical data continued. The system is currently used in Africa, South America, the Middle East, the Gulf region and parts of Asia. An external service provider now also has the opportunity to take finger prints from visa applicants, which improves the range of services offered for visa applicants.
16.5. Austrian Representations Abroad and Honorary Consulates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diplomatic and other missions of the FMEIA</th>
<th>As of 31 Dec. 2013</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>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Cultural Fora</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other representations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following in-depth evaluations, adaptations of the network of Austrian representations abroad are undertaken on a regular basis. In 2011, the embassies in Muscat and Harare as well as the consulate in Zurich were closed. In September 2012, the embassy in Bogotá was closed, while in Doha a combined embassy and representation of the Austrian Economic Chamber was opened. In 2013 the consulates in Krakow and Chicago were closed.

In addition to the missions that fall directly under the FMEIA’s responsibility, Austria’s international presence also includes the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). In 2013, the ADA maintained ten offices abroad. Nine Austria Institutes offer German language courses under the auspices of the FMEIA. The Austrian Foreign Service receives valuable support from 300 Honorary Consuls around the world. Honorary Consuls, who are eminent figures with close ties to Austria, work on an honorary basis and provide consular services. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, they extend the network of Austria’s international consular presence and contribute to the promotion of economic and cultural relations between Austria and the respective host country.

In 2013, ten new honorary consulates were opened:

- Austrian Honorary consulate Lahti (Finland)
- Austrian Honorary consulate-general Zurich (Switzerland)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Harare (Zimbabwe)
- Austrian Honorary consulate-general Bogotá (Colombia)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Gdańsk (Poland)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Maastricht (Netherlands)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Krakow (Poland)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Arequipa (Peru)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Freetown (Sierra Leone)
- Austrian Honorary consulate Mauren (Principality of Liechtenstein)
16.6. Organisational Chart
16.7. The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna

Established in 1754 during the reign of Empress Maria Theresia as the Oriental Academy, the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna (DA) is one of the oldest schools of its kind. After having been shut down during the 2nd World War, it was re-established in 1964 under its current name as a postgraduate training institution. In 1996, having until then been run and funded by the Austrian federal administration, it was granted the status of an independent public training institution.

The following postgraduate academic programmes were offered in 2013:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Number of Participants</th>
<th>Number of Austrians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49. Diploma programme</td>
<td>23 (graduates)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Diploma programme</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Master of Advanced International Studies (MAIS) programme; joint degree of the DA and the University of Vienna</td>
<td>63 (61 graduates)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. MAIS programme</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. MAIS programme (1st year)</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Master of Science in Environmental Technology and International Affairs (ETIA) programme; conducted in cooperation with the Vienna University of Technology</td>
<td>23 (graduates)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ETIA programme</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. ETIA programme (1st year)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
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In the academic year 2013/14 a total of 175 students from 47 countries and all continents studied at the DA.

In the context of diplomatic training and further training programmes (Executive Training Programmes), the DA offered special courses tailored to the needs of diplomats and other civil service officials from the following countries or groups of countries: South Caucasus and South East Europe, Iraq (Kurdistan Regional Government), Danube area/Western Balkans, Black Sea region, Middle East (M.A.-students), Africa and Kazakhstan. The DA also conducted training modules for the FMEIA, a workshop for the Erste Group and seminars for the Regional School of Public Administration from Montenegro as well as a negotiation techniques training seminar for the OSCE. A
negotiation skills training seminar was also offered for working professionals.

The Summer Course in German Language and Austrian Studies was attended by 44 participants from 29 countries worldwide. Summer Schools were also organised for the European Studies Institute of MGIMO University (Moscow) and the Free University of Brussels.

The DA is also a popular venue for conferences. In 2013, it hosted some 100 public events including lectures and panel discussions involving (foreign) ministers from Austria, Armenia, Belgium, France, Montenegro, Slovakia and Sri Lanka, numerous ambassadors and representatives from the EU and international organisations, the current Prime Minister of Albania, the Secretary General of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) and the Secretary General of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The conferences held dealt with a variety of topics including “From Arab Spring to Democracy”, “Central Europe Revisited”, “Weltmacht Brasilien” (Global Power Brazil), “Mexikos Protest gegen den Anschluss” (Mexico’s protest against the Anschluss, concert and discussion), “70 Jahre Moskauer Deklaration” (70th anniversary of Moscow Declaration), and the fight against human trafficking. A gala was also held in the presence of Federal President Heinz Fischer in celebration of the 175th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Austria and the USA. The annual Milton Wolf Seminar on Media and Diplomacy dealt with “Diplomatic manoeuvres and journalistic coverage in a time of reset, pivot and rebalance”. Four events were organised in the context of the series of “workshop talks” with the Future Fund of the Republic of Austria.

The annual International Forum on Diplomatic Training (IFDT, meeting of Deans and Directors of Diplomatic Academies and Institutes of International Relations chaired by the DA and Georgetown University) could not be held as scheduled at the Diplomatic Academy in Belgrade, but instead the IFDT Steering Committee met in Vienna at the invitation of the DA.

Apart from its Yearbook of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, the DA also published a Favorita Paper on the topic of “UN Agencies Reaching out to the Academia and the Civil Society”.

The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna
17. Selected Documents

Note: Check against delivery.

17.1. Opening Remarks by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the European Regional Workshop on Reclaiming the Protection of Civilians under International Humanitarian Law

Vienna, 21 February 2013

Dear Foreign Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to welcome you to this Workshop here in Vienna, organized jointly by the Austrian and Norwegian foreign ministries. A particularly warm welcome goes to my colleague Espen Barth Eide.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just last week I was visiting Afghanistan, a country with a long and sad history of armed conflict, extremism and grave lack of protection of civilians. Equally, the on-going crises in Syria, Mali and the Sahel region are leading to thousands of deaths, massive displacement and grave violations of human rights.

In Syria, around 70 000 people have lost their lives so far and more than 700,000 Syrians are now refugees in neighbouring countries.

In Mali, an estimated 230,000 people are displaced inside the country and over 150,000 are refugees in other countries.

The tremendous human suffering of civilians in armed conflicts across the globe is unacceptable. Much more must be done to protect the civilian population.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The protection of civilians in armed conflict has been among Austria’s top priorities for many years. This is why, when my colleague Espen asked me to hold the European part of this workshop series on the protection of civilians here in Vienna, I immediately agreed.

With its long engagement for the topic Austria has gained significant experience which I believe can be useful in this joint initiative:

1. The protection of civilians was the key theme of Austria’s Presidency of the UN Security Council in November 2009 when we managed to get landmark Resolution 1894 adopted. This resolution aims to improve compli-
Selected Documents

ance of parties to armed conflict with international standards for the protection of civilians. In it, the Security Council clearly states its willingness to take appropriate measures to respond to situations where civilians are being targeted. It strongly opposes impunity and provides for accountability mechanisms, including prosecution under criminal law and reparation programmes for victims.

The resolution also includes measures to ensure that peacekeeping mandates fully take into account the need to protect civilians. Austria has since been working on different levels – be it the UN, the EU or NATO Partnership for Peace – to increase awareness for this need and to help find solutions to effectively implement it during concrete peacekeeping operations.

Austria has recently developed a unique training programme on the protection of civilians in armed conflict for senior decision-makers in military, police and civilian administrations. A pilot course was successfully completed at the Austrian Peace Centre in Stadtschlaining last December, and we have decided to run this course on a regular basis for national and international participants.

2. Women and children are often the most vulnerable, both in numbers of the population affected and as specific targets of violence. Children have been victims of brutal attacks on schools and hospitals in Syria and they also constitute the majority of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. The last few months saw terrible human rights violations by extremist groups in northern Mali including rape, torture and the recruitment of child soldiers.

The special needs of women and children are thus another longstanding Austrian priority. An important milestone was Security Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, emphasising the essential role of women in all phases of conflict settlement and peace-building. Austria was among the first countries worldwide to adopt a National Action Plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 in 2007.

As regards protection of children in armed conflict, Austria successfully promoted greater awareness for children’s rights in EU missions and, together with partners, successfully pushed for the adoption of Security Council resolution 1882 which enables to black-list states not only for recruitment of child soldiers but also for killing and sexual violence against children, leading to a targeted UN monitoring and reporting mechanism. Austria has also long been supporting projects on the reintegration of child soldiers and children affected by war, providing psychosocial support, schooling and vocational training.

3. Journalists play a special role also in armed conflicts as providers of information including on violations of human rights and targeting of civilians – which in turn is crucial for accountability and the fight against impunity.

As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Austria has successfully initiated a first-time resolution on the safety of journalists last September. The
new resolution represents a significant step forward in the promotion of the protection of journalists’ safety. It condemns all forms of attacks against journalists and calls on States to end impunity, by investigating attacks, bringing the perpetrators to justice and providing remedies for victims.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

**International Humanitarian Law** provides a comprehensive legal framework on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. These rules would give civilians significant protection from the effects of military operations if only all actors would follow them. However, civilians continue to be killed and injured in conflicts around the world every day.

But how can we ensure that International humanitarian law is properly respected? One way is that we take our pledge seriously to combat impunity. Austria thus works on all levels to promote the rule of law and increase accountability – for example by supporting the Human Rights Council’s Commission of Inquiry in Syria. We are increasingly concerned that there have been no consequences for perpetrators so far. The situation in Syria needs to be referred to the International Criminal Court. A referral to the ICC would make clear to every fighter on all sides of the conflict that the gravest crimes will eventually be punished.

The outcome of this workshop as well as the summaries of the three preceding regional seminars in Buenos Aires, Jakarta and Kampala will serve as input to the global conference to be held in Oslo in May later this year. It will hopefully be possible to work out and agree on a number of practical measures and recommendations that will help to effectively improve the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. This task will benefit from the valuable contributions of all of you: people with first-hand experience from military and civilian administration, the UN, humanitarian organisations and members of the civil society. I thank you all for your participation.
17.2. Opening Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the 5th United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) Global Forum Vienna, Hofburg, 27 February 2013

Your Highness,
Your Eminencies,
Your Excellencies,
Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour to welcome you all on the occasion of the 5th UNAOC Global Forum in Vienna. As host country, Austria takes pride in being a firm and reliable supporter of the Alliance.

I would like to extend my gratitude to the Governments of Spain and Turkey, for the initiation of such an imperative initiative five years ago. We are honoured by the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, which clearly underscores the timeliness and relevance of the Alliance in terms of the UN Agenda. I would also like to thank High Representative Jorge Sampaio for his firm commitment to build the Alliance into a vital international political initiative. At the same time, I am delighted to welcome the incoming High Representative Nassir Al-Nasser and wish him all due success in his future endeavours.

Let me begin by emphasizing the significance of the Alliance and its untiring efforts to improve understanding and co-operation among nations and peoples across cultures and religions.

The Alliance complements and reinforces Austria’s long standing tradition in advancing constructive dialogue. Deeply-rooted in Austrian foreign policy, dialogue constitutes the indispensable fibre that holds our pluralistic societies together and has to be recognized as prerequisite for the peaceful co-existence of different cultures and religions. Culture has an essential value for all human development and only by recognising this value can we start a real dialogue between civilisations.

The 5th Global Forum takes place at an important crossroad. New and ever-changing geo-political realities in combination with the growing significance of civil society provide a fertile environment to successfully translate diversity into an added-value for communities and society as such. However, this process must be strengthened through leadership I mean through really responsible leadership.

Consequently, this year’s Forum will focus on the question of Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue. Allow me to touch upon the following four areas, to draw a complete picture of the overarching themes discussed in sessions and workshops over the next two days:
My first point revolves around the question of freedom of religion. Living in a context of growing diversity and pluralism presents a multi-fold challenge for society. Striving to uphold the universal right to freedom of religion, thought, and conscience becomes necessary. However, in order to realize this fundamental right, we must promote a culture of tolerance, which in turn requires corresponding education and awareness-building.

Secondly, I shall turn to freedom of expression, which constitutes most certainly both a right and a responsibility. Realizing the potential of free flow of information is the order of the day, it needs however to be accompanied by adequate education and responsible leadership by governments and practitioners alike. Reshaping media discourses towards diversity can further the agenda of fostering understanding.

The issue of migration and integration constitutes my third point. We have to highlight the economic, social, and cultural benefits of migration and integration. There is a great need to de-politicise the subject of migration and to counterbalance negative perceptions by changing the approach to this issue. Thus for example I am proud that in Austria a state-secretary for integration – Mr. Sebastian Kurz – was installed upon my proposal. The experiences with this new state-secretariat can only be described positively. In a globalized world, the challenge of migration most certainly requires responsible and informed leadership at all levels of society, so as to foster integration and to make it to a benefit for all.

Fourthly, the Forum will explore different priority regions, where communities and governments have come to understand and live the concept of diversity through very different means. Let me draw your attention to a region of particular interest to Austria, namely that of the “Danube and Black Sea, South Caucasus and Central Asia”. This cluster of countries presents a unique example of growing cultural diversity. By building upon best practices, we can promote strong sub-regional cooperation, support regional integration and further develop the understanding of the benefits of diversity. Armenia marks one of UNAOC’s youngest members, further underlining the growing importance of the region.

We have gathered here today to mark the commencement of the 5th UNAOC Global Forum in Vienna that constitutes a continuation of the imperative work the Alliance has undertaken over the past years. Against this background, I hold great expectations in the outcomes of this year’s Forum. The adoption of the Vienna Declaration will capture and reflect the dedication of members towards the Alliance. The expansion of regional perspectives, alongside a refocus on thematic priorities will guide the strategic outlook of the UNAOC and its work into the future.

Already now, during the opening of the Forum, I can share a significant outcome of the Forum with you: I would like to direct your attention to the 150 participants of the Youth Event, who have convened yesterday to engage in
fruitful discussions on the topics of the Forum. I want to share my admiration and respect for the level of dedication and professionalism, you have brought to yesterday’s Youth Event. Innovative ideas in combination with motivated personalities constitute promising leadership for a brighter future. Let me conclude by reiterating Austria’s continuous commitment to constructive dialogue between cultures and religions. In the coming two days, all of us have the unique opportunity to strengthen the Alliance’s objectives, sharpen its priorities, and foster co-operation. With this in mind, I encourage all of you to actively engage in broad consultations and discussions, thus identifying sustainable solutions for arising challenges.

Thank you!

17.3. Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Europe Day matinee “Europa der Bürger: Mitdenken. Mitreden. Mitgestalten.” Vienna, Diplomatic Academy, 7 May 2013

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to today’s matinee celebrating Europe Day.

I am particularly pleased to see that so many leading representatives from business, science, the media and student councils have been able to join us. Today’s event provides us with an opportunity to engage in an exchange of views on the role each of us can play in a Europe of citizens and on the opportunities for civic participation at European level.

The event’s title is highly topical and very well chosen. Because:
• We are in the middle of the European Year of Citizens
• We are celebrating 20 years of Union citizenship
• We see that Europe has arrived at a turning point and is taking major strides towards further integration

Europe is growing together – this is a fact. We are witnessing the evolution of a European political area, emerging in addition to the Single Market and the Monetary Union.

Elections to the European Parliament will be held in May 2014. This is a good opportunity for us to take a closer look at the role played by citizens in today’s Europe and at what citizens may expect from Europe.

What is the added value created by Union citizenship for each and every one of us and how can citizens make better use of their rights in the EU? How
can citizens become more involved and contribute to decision-making at EU level?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my view the political and economic future of the EU needs to be seen both as a task and an opportunity. It is indeed an issue worthy of proper dialogue. Strengthening this Europe of citizens means developing a stronger and more solid foundation for Europe that is supported by all.

One of the most visible benefits of European Union citizenship is the right to freedom of movement. If I wish, I can get into my car today and drive from Vienna to Prague and from Prague to Berlin and beyond without having to stop at any borders. In other words, every EU citizen enjoys the right to move and reside freely in the territory of the Member States.

And it is precisely this right to freedom of movement that is most important to Union citizens. This is not surprising, considering that more and more Europeans make active use of their right to mobility. About 12 million EU citizens live in an EU Member State that is not their home country. The number of Union citizens who travel regularly to other EU countries, for business or private reasons, is even higher.

Other examples include the strengthening of consumer rights, for instance, when purchasing goods or services in another EU country, or the strengthening of air passenger rights in the EU.

The opportunity to study abroad, for example under the Erasmus programme, which is actively used by many young people today, is another aspect of this enhanced mobility.

These examples go to show that we enjoy the benefits of Union citizenship on a daily basis – although at times we may not even realize that we are able to do such things thanks to the EU.

An essential goal pursued by this year’s European Year of Citizens is thus raising awareness of the rights we as citizens enjoy thanks to EU membership and the many amenities and opportunities it opens up – especially for young people.

A Europe of citizens requires broad-based democratic cooperation. Decisions at European level require acceptance on the part of EU citizens – and acceptance is only possible with closer involvement of citizens.

During this European Year of Citizens, we are frequently faced with the question of the extent to which people make use of their opportunities to contribute, participate and make their voices heard.

And indeed, a range of democratic co-determination opportunities are already in place – starting with the elections to the European Parliament through to the instrument of European citizen initiative. However, citizens do not always make use of the opportunities they have available, which is
also reflected in the fact that voters’ turnout at the European parliamentary elections has declined across the EU (from 63% in 1979 to 43% in 2009).

This is surprising, since Europe’s citizens do indeed contribute to political debate and show interest. Just take water supply as an example – the ongoing discussion on EU-wide rules for water supply concessions has mobilised a huge number of citizens. In fact 1 million citizens supported a European citizens’ initiative on this topic.

But why do citizens still feel that their voice is not being heard when it comes to decisions taken at EU level, that citizens feel they are not being given the opportunity to have their say?

One possible answer is provided by the recent Eurobarometer survey: only 35% of Austrians (EU-27: 31%) feel that their voice is heard in the EU, while 62% (EU27: 64%) think their voice is not being heard.

This tells us that we need to increase the visibility of EU players and this is indeed a central demand. With a view to reviving Europe-wide political debate, discussions currently focus on the nomination of top candidates for the office of Commission President in the 2014 European elections.

And I wonder, why don’t we ask citizens to directly elect the President of the Commission? This would give Europe greater visibility, a human face, so to speak. This would add to the Commission President’s accountability towards Europe and its citizens, the President would thus be more clearly responsible than today. Directly elected means directly responsible. The focus of European elections would thus shift towards European political parties and their programmes, and what is more, towards the individuals standing in elections.

Strengthening the Union bodies’ democratic legitimacy is considered a key issue for the future. If the Economic and Monetary Union is to be deepened and if more competences are to be transferred to EU bodies, it is all the more important that these steps are supported by EU citizens and that the democratic legitimacy of decisions is ensured at EU level.

I as a politician consider it particularly important to maintain an open, lively and active dialogue with citizens and most especially on the topic of Europe. When I meet and have discussions with EU citizens at my “EU Townhall Meetings”, which are taking me all over the country, I always notice just how interested people are in the EU. Likewise, there is a considerable need for information on new developments within the European Union.

In the context of his DARUM EUROPA (That’s why Europe) dialogue tour on which he will travel through all federal provinces until July 2013, State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka is visiting Austrian companies in order to engage in direct talks with employees and discuss matters relating to the European Union and Austria’s EU membership.
Let me underline that I am convinced that the EU will always enjoy a high level of acceptance as long as it justifies its existence through visible and tangible success.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not possible to create and shape Europe without the close involvement of its citizens. We need their support and backing, their help and assistance – and most of all their ideas and wishes in order to lead Europe into a successful future. And this is indeed – in the spirit of the European Year of Citizens – the dedicated focus of today’s event.

Thank you for your kind attention. I’m looking forward to today’s discussion.

17.4. Address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger
at the event commemorating the liberation from National Socialism and the end of the Second World War in Europe “Fest der Freude”
Vienna, Heldenplatz, 8 May 2013

Guests of Honour,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On the eighth of May, the day when Europe was liberated from war and terror, the focus is on commemoration and new beginnings.

At the same time, we are deeply grateful to our liberators whose enormous military efforts entailing huge sacrifices enabled the restoration of a free and democratic Austria. We are most grateful to all those people of various origins and beliefs who had the courage to oppose Nazi terror.

The eighth of May is a day of remembrance and commemoration. We commemorate the millions of victims claimed by the Nazi terror regime, which descended upon Austria 75 years ago in March 1938 and found supporters and followers in too many of our compatriots.

We also commemorate all those who risked and lost their lives standing up against this Nazi terror regime and who contributed to the re-emergence of a democratic Austria in the spirit of “never again”. I’m thinking here, for instance, of Innsbruck that liberated itself.

Here and today we also commit ourselves to this “never again” – and we do so to ensure that the injustice of that time, just as the suffering this injustice brought to so many people, will never be forgotten. The individual suffering of millions of people – we lack the words and in fact there are no words to describe this injustice. Commemorating their destiny here and now is part of our responsibility towards our compatriots today and for future generations.
We commit ourselves to honest remembrance, which – and I quote Richard von Weizsäcker – becomes part of your own inner self. Thus we too declare our commitment here and today “never to forget”.

The commemoration of the fate of millions of men, women and children teaches us to counter hostility, prejudice, hatred and intolerance with all resolve and to stand up for peace, tolerance and togetherness.

This is why this “never again” is also a commitment to the fundamental values which are to characterise Austria and Europe today and in future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 8th of May 1945 is also a day that marks radical change, new challenges and new beginnings. For Europe, it marks the end of the war, of Nazi tyranny and the beginning of the reconstruction of Europe. When on the 9th of May 1950 the foundation for the European peace project was laid, it was clear for the generation who had experienced the horrors of war that peace was not a matter of course. The founding fathers of the new Europe had been very well aware of the fact that the only permanent basis for the new and united Europe is the commitment to common European values, democracy and the respect of human rights.

Europe is thus the answer that opposes despotism and war, while at the same time being the best guarantee that such inconceivable atrocities will never be repeated.

We will only be able to solve the burning questions of today and the future by joining forces – and certainly not with uncoordinated national approaches. How can we live up to the challenges to be faced? What prerequisites do we have to create in order to guarantee and promote safety, security, prosperity and personal happiness for all people in the best possible manner?

In my view, there are three essential pillars Europe must be based on today and in the future: the EU as a community of peace, a community of values and a community that is based on solidarity.

Let me start with the first one, the EU as a community of peace.

More than 60 years after the historic Schuman Declaration that laid the groundwork for the European peace project, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

The European Union’s contribution to overcoming age-old hostilities was acknowledged as was the peaceful re-unification of our continent after the fall of the Iron Curtain.

And the EU’s peaceful enlargement has been an unparalleled success story. We have grown from the Europe of the Six to a Europe of what is soon to be 28. From Austria’s point of view, this process must not remain incomplete. Because there is only one option for long-term peace in the Balkans and in
Europe at large: the inclusion of the entire region in the process of European integration.

This brings me to my second item: Europe as a community of values. The EU is not just a community of states. It is built on freedom and law, a legal order which is based on common values and fundamental rights. The commitment to shared and common values, to rule of law, democracy and human rights also determines the EU’s **international involvement and commitment**. This holds true for our attitude towards the death penalty or the fight against impunity for the most serious human rights violations. These values create the basis for our struggle against climate change and against poverty. These values at the same time form the foundation for our commitment to promoting disarmament and non-proliferation.

Let me now turn to my third aspect: Europe as a community that is based on solidarity:

Experience during the financial, euro and debt crisis has clearly illustrated that the EU is – and actually has to be – a community based on solidarity. Precisely against the background of a Europe-wide rise in unemployment rates, especially among young people, the fight against social exclusion must enjoy top priority.

Europe’s social model and its model of life are unique in the world. Indeed I am convinced that it is the only sustainable system in the 21st century that will enable us to manage the economic, social and ecological challenges of our time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union’s understanding of itself as a community of peace that is based on solidarity must also be considered a mandate to future generations, especially in the light of the challenges Europe is facing today.

For Europeans it has become quite natural to live in peace, governed by the rule of law and with respect for human dignity.

This is, however, not something that should be taken for granted but rather the result of each and everyone’s commitment.

At the same time, this will remain the historic challenge to be tackled by the new Europe: this new Europe is and must remain the positive antithesis to the bitterest experience of our past. What started as a European peace project must evolve into a global cornerstone of peace in the 21st century.

From the moral co-responsibility for the past, we today draw the strength and dedicate ourselves to shaping a future dominated by pluralism of opinions, convictions and religions.

Today’s commemoration is at the same time a mandate for us all. We are called upon to fill the vision of a Europe as a community of peace, values and solidarity with life, to make it tangible for all people and to ensure that these historic achievements of European post-war history will never be forgotten.

Thank you.
17.5.  Opening address by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the International Expert Conference Vienna+20: Advancing the Protection of Human Rights Vienna, Hofburg, 27 June 2013

Madame High Commissioner,
Mr Deputy Secretary General,
Mr Secretary General of Amnesty International,
Dr. Karman,
Ms. Alexejeva,
Excellencies,
Distinguished experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me extend my warm welcome to all of you participants, high level guests and distinguished experts to the opening ceremony of this High Level Expert Conference in commemoration of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993.

As impressive as this opening panel is, it is, unfortunately, not complete. I regret that Archbishop Mor Gregorios from Aleppo could not follow our invitation to speak at this panel today. As you know, he and Archbishop Paul Yazigi are victims of the terrible conflict in Syria. They were taken hostage more than two months ago and hopes that they will be released soon have so far been shattered. Our discussions here in Vienna will focus on those who suffer most of human rights violations and I would like to express at this particular occasion my deep felt compassion for all the victims who are dedicated like Archbishop Gregorius to safeguard freedom of religion, sometimes even without consideration of their own risks and safety.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here gathered today, not only to look back on a ground breaking conference 20 years ago, at a time when epochal change was unfolding, right after the fall of the iron curtain, the end of the cold war and the demise of the Soviet Union. We are also here today to look ahead and deliberate jointly what further efforts can be undertaken to advance the protection human rights world wide. We have gone a long way. A lot has been achieved. A lot remains to be done.

Back then, in June 1993, an atmosphere of hope had spread across the world. Peaceful democracy movements had succeeded in bringing an end to totalitarian regimes in Eastern Europe. The time was ripe for the setting of new standards for the worldwide protection of human rights. The conference turned out to be a huge success: representatives of 171 states and more than 1500 civil society organisations came together and achieved a paradigmatic
shift in the international protection of human rights. They broke new ground, both on substance and on institutions.

Today, we also celebrate the 20th birthday of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and her office. This Office was created as a direct result of the World Conference and remains its most visible result: it has made crucial contributions to the fundamentally new way in which the United Nations address human rights. The protection of human rights is one of the three pillars of the UN, and is now systematically integrated into all UN activities. So I wish to take this opportunity to extend a heartfelt “Happy Birthday!” to High Commissioner Navi Pillay and her team.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20 years after the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the commitments made at this historic event have by and large born fruit: The universality, interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights are generally undisputed. Intensive efforts have been made for the protection of women’s rights as human rights, also through the creation and activities of UN Women. The principle of human rights protection as a legitimate concern of the international community is not questioned any longer. The Ottawa and Oslo processes on landmines and cluster munitions have amply proved that civil society organisations have become genuine partners of governments in the protection of human rights.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria has made serious efforts, and I believe successfully so, to contribute to this leap forward in global human rights protection. This commitment is also evident in our membership in the UN Human Rights Council. We have worked hard to contribute to its effectiveness. Let me mention two of our priorities:

The protection of religious minorities and of religious freedom as such is one of our foremost concerns. In many parts of the world, members of religious minorities suffer from a rising number of violent attacks, including against their places of worship. Discrimination and violence on religious grounds or as a result of changing one’s religion or belief must end. To this end, Austria initiated EU-Guidelines to systematically address this issue in the context of the EU’s Foreign Policy.

The safety of journalists is equally high on our agenda. Around the world, journalists are increasingly threatened, arbitrarily detained or even killed for their commitment to freedom of speech. A particular problem is the impunity with which these attacks happen – 90 % of the cases remain unresolved. Within the Human Rights Council, a ground-breaking resolution was passed upon our initiative that places this issue firmly on the international agenda.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Already these few examples demonstrate how much remains to be done. This is why High Commissioner Pillay and I have taken the initiative to organise this conference. We do not want to rest on the achievements of the World Conference, but to look into the future and identify what more must be done to further improve the effective protection of all human rights worldwide. After all, millions of men, women and children, in particular people with disabilities, are still deprived of their fundamental civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

Mindful of the pivotal role of civil society in the protection of human rights, the High Commissioner and I wanted civil society representatives and human rights defenders to be at the forefront of this conference. They are the ones that work in the field every day and experience first-hand what the great challenges are to the realisation of all human rights. All too often they become targets of unacceptable harassment, intimidation and violence. Civil Society can help us develop policies and instruments for tackling these challenges.

Together with the Special Procedures mandate holders of the Human Rights Council and representatives of regional organisations, I am convinced that we will develop action-oriented recommendations on the three key themes of the Conference: the rule of law, the participation of women in public and political life, and human rights in the post-2015 development agenda. We will present these recommendations to the UN Human Rights Council and the UN General Assembly in autumn. More specifically and in cooperation with the High Commissioner, we will organise a high level event on 25 September in New York, in the margins of the UN General Assembly Ministerial Week, to initiate a systematic follow-up process. I count on all of you to support us in this endeavour.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude with a quotation from the opening speech, in 1993, of one of my distinguished predecessors as Foreign Minister, Dr. Alois Mock, President of the Vienna World Conference:

“If we want to make a new milestone in the development of human rights, (...) then we have to give a new impetus to the idea that the human being, its needs and its rights, is at the root of each and every sovereign State and at the root of the collectivity of States known as the United Nations”.

This is as true and wise now as it was then. Let us be guided by these true and wise words throughout the next day. I wish you fruitful deliberations! Thank you!
17.6. Statement by Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Ministerial Segment of the International IAEA Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts
Vienna International Centre, 1 July 2013

Director General,
Mr President – Honorable Minister Martonyi,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

As the representative of the host country of the International Atomic Energy Agency, I would like to start my statement with a hearty welcome to all participants of this international conference on nuclear security. This conference is a regular feature of the Agency’s meetings that it conducts to keep itself up-to-date with new challenges. For the first time, it convenes also at ministerial level, which reflects the growing political significance of this aspect of the Agency’s global work, and I am happy to participate.

Last year, I addressed the United Nations High Level Event on Nuclear Terrorism in New York. At that time, we all referred to the valuable work the Agency is doing in Vienna on nuclear security. The success of this work, however, is influenced by many factors that go beyond the narrow, technical definition of nuclear security. In Austria’s view, we have to keep in mind how States handle all their nuclear activities, both military and civilian. While aligning myself with the statement made on behalf of the EU, let me refer to the following three aspects, which have shaped and continue to determine how we address nuclear challenges.

First, let me look at the military dimensions. In the 20th century, humankind utterly failed to settle its differences by diplomatic means. As a consequence, humankind has created a system of international organisations to foster peace and cooperation. Many inhuman weapon systems have been banned as a result of the intolerable suffering inflicted on soldiers and on civilians, especially chemical and biological weapons among the weapons of mass destruction. This has not yet been achieved with nuclear weapons, which remain with us despite their indiscriminate character and unacceptable humanitarian consequences. In this context, humankind looks for the required leadership of the nuclear possessor states, foremost at Russia and the United States. On 19th June, I immediately welcomed the announcement by US President Obama in Berlin of his intention to take further nuclear disarmament steps beyond those agreed in the new START Treaty. Indeed, if Russia and the United States can agree on bold future steps, the other nuclear possessor states will also have to follow. Some may consider global nuclear disarmament to be a distant dream, but I would argue that it should be an
urgent global priority. It is just as much a priority as halting the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Austria has always advocated the view that both, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation need to be seen as two sides of the same coin, as mutually reinforcing concepts that can only be achieved together. The only sustainable approach to address the challenges posed by nuclear weapons is to build credible political and legal barriers against nuclear weapons as such and to reduce and eliminate the perceived political and security motivations for the possession of these weapons.

Second, let me turn to the civilian nuclear fuel cycle. While humankind was aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, it neglected the safety risks of civilian nuclear installations and activities. Then the Chernobyl accident happened in 1986. It affected vast areas and many millions of people with its radioactive fall-out, including Austria. Only then, and thanks to the Agency in Vienna, did we take nuclear safety seriously at the global level. But the Fukushima accident in 2011 proved that a 100 per cent safety does not exist. However, it is possible to take precautions. The most effective precaution is not to use nuclear fission for the generation of power, a precaution that Austria even enshrined in its constitution. Thus we do not have any operating nuclear power plants and related fuel cycle activities. In addition, we have recently managed the conversion of our last remaining research reactor from High Enriched Uranium to Low Enriched Uranium thanks to the assistance and advice of the IAEA and other friends. Such risk reduction measures should be taken by all countries operating research reactors. Apart from being “nuclear free” like Austria, the second best precaution against nuclear accidents and security incidents would be to put all nuclear material and all nuclear facilities and activities under multilateral control in a way that assures that the highest standards for safety, security, and non-proliferation are met. Austria has made such a proposal both in the Agency as well as within the framework of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. It is a “cradle to grave” approach that would address many of the current short-comings.

Third, let me now focus on Nuclear Security under the Agency’s definition. Austria has been a long-standing supporter of the Agency’s activities in this field. We were among the first countries to contribute to the nuclear security fund, and now we continue with our contributions through the European Union. Furthermore, Austria led the countries that requested the diplomatic conference that adopted the amendment of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material in 2005. We also actively support the work of the committee of the UN Security Council resolution 1540, and we have facilitated a coordinated input of international and regional organisations on “1540 matters”. We hope that also civil society organisations will take up the opportunities for engagement after the civil society forum that was organised in January 2013 with the help of the new Vienna office of the UNODA. Earlier, together with Norway and the Nuclear Threat Initiative, we organized a
symposium to advance efforts for the elimination of High Enriched Uranium from civilian use. All these activities and actions were small steps, but they demonstrate that we do not lean back in our “nuclear free Austria”, and that we continue with our engagement in global activities. Certainly, countries with a nuclear programme have a much bigger responsibility to bear. Here, I would like to recognise the news that in June, the US and Russia agreed on a framework to continue their non-proliferation partnership. This is a direct contribution to enhancing nuclear security through reducing nuclear threats. Indeed, there are many encouraging activities. Let us hope that we are spared a nuclear security night-mare of the scale of the disasters we experienced in the Second World War and with Chernobyl and Fukushima. The Agency, as the only organisation with a global mandate in this field, will have to play a central role in our drive to enhance global efforts.

Mr. President,
Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

With these reflections I would like to commend the outcome document that was prepared for the ministerial segment of the conference. I would also like to wish all nuclear experts and conference participants a productive and fruitful week in Vienna.

I thank you for your attention.

17.7. Statement by Federal President Dr. Heinz Fischer at the 68th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
New York, 24 September 2013

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you, Mr. President, for putting the discussion in this year’s general debate under a very pertinent subject, namely “Setting the stage for the Post-2015 Development Agenda”.

Shaping our planet’s future after 2015 is now one of the crucial tasks ahead of us. While the international community remains committed to the full implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, work on the post-2015 agenda has started. One idea which has been brought to my particular attention is to “upgrade” the eradication of hunger from an indicator to a goal in this new agenda. More still needs to be done and everyone must contribute a fair share: States, International Organisations, the private sector, academia
and civil society alike. Let me assure you that Austria will contribute her share as well.

Mr. President,

The International Community in its search for global security is currently facing major threats. The Middle East remains exposed to fundamental challenges. While we welcome the agreement reached between the United States and the Russian Federation on a framework for the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons arsenal, we believe that the Security Council should refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Accountability is necessary to stop the atrocities and prevent future crimes.

The path to democratic participation and a new beginning in Syria, the actual goal of the civilian protests that started two and a half years ago, remains crucial. Unfortunately, the parties seem to be firmly set on a military solution to the conflict. However it should be clear that the best way to achieving a sustainable solution can only be a political, negotiated one.

By now the civil war in Syria heavily affects all neighbouring countries. The conflict is a Syrian one; the consequences go far beyond its borders, it has, indeed, become international.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems to have been overshadowed by the upheavals in the region. I have followed events there for almost 40 years. I am convinced that what is needed for a solution is not only the willingness to negotiate in good faith but also to take into account the needs and sensitivities of the negotiating partner. I, for one, just cannot believe that the value of settlements for Israel is bigger than the damage these settlements do as an obstacle to peace.

We welcome that the new US administration has devoted its full attention to this long-standing question and that direct negotiations have resumed at the end of July. What we need now is decisive leadership. We are convinced that a breakthrough in this central conflict would also mean a decisive step towards a stabilization of the entire region.

Mr. President,

While we continue to support the on-going transition processes in the Arab world, recent developments in the region have cast a shadow on the democratic achievements made so far. The difficult path to democracy will greatly depend on including all parts of society.

Mr. President,

Vienna and its UN-Headquarters serve as a platform for the discussion on sustainable development. Austria is very pleased that the Office of the Special Representative of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative in Vienna started
its activities on July 1st of this year. We welcome the Initiative’s cooperation with thematic and regional hubs as well as other specialized organizations like UNIDO.

Austria is also the host-country of the newly established International Anti-Corruption Academy, an international organisation and centre of excellence, which already undertook several successful activities in fighting corruption as one of the most severe obstacles to development in all fields. I thank the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting its second Assembly of Parties in December 2013. Furthermore I would like to invite all States which have not yet done so to become members of the Anti-Corruption Academy.

Distinguished delegates,

This year’s United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Forum took place in Vienna in February under the forward-looking theme: “Promoting Responsible Leadership in Diversity and Dialogue”. More than 1,500 participants from governments, civil society, the private sector and the media as well as a Youth Forum of 150 outstanding and highly dedicated participants provided most valuable input for the discussions of the Global Forum.

In this context, I am also pleased to inform that the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue was inaugurated in Vienna on November 26th of last year. The Centre – a joint initiative by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Kingdom of Spain and the Republic of Austria – serves as an interactive platform for religious leaders, experts, and civil society alike.

Mr. President,

Multilateral cooperation can deliver solutions to global problems. The historic accomplishment of the Arms Trade Treaty was an important sign in this regard. We look forward to its earliest possible entry into force. At the same time, the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime is being challenged day by day through alarming developments. We were deeply shocked by the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We observe North Korea’s continued development of nuclear weapons and missile capabilities. And we have new hope that the Iranian nuclear issue will be resolved by negotiations which, after the election of a new Iranian President, should be resumed shortly.

Similarly, the continued reliance on nuclear weapons and the limited progress towards nuclear disarmament are of great global concern. Nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation efforts can only be achieved together. Nuclear weapons should be stigmatized, banned and eliminated. The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have to be put at the center of our attention.

Mr. President,

While some might believe that there is a contradiction regarding the respect of cultural and religious differences on the one hand and the universality of
human rights on the other, I am convinced that the one reinforces the other. If people and nations can count on human rights being guaranteed they will show respect for “the other”.

The Human Rights Council, with its Universal Periodic Review and Special Procedures, has, within a few years, developed into an effective instrument to address human rights violations and crisis situations in many instances. Austria, as a current member of the Council, is contributing to these efforts with targeted initiatives for the safety of journalists, the protection of religious minorities, or the promotion of the rights of the child.

We welcome the continuous trend towards universal abolition of the death penalty. However, too many countries still maintain a retentionist policy towards this cruel and inhuman form of punishment. Our diplomatic efforts therefore have to be re-enforced.

We are worried by increased violations of human rights based on sexual orientation or gender identity. To be threatened even with death because of being a homosexual is of utmost concern.

The 1993 Vienna Conference and the World Summit 2005 firmly placed human rights at the centre of UN activities. Respect for human rights is an indispensable prerequisite for peace, security and development.

Mr. President,

Last year’s high-level meeting on the rule of law of the General Assembly provided an excellent opportunity to renew our commitment to the rule of law at the national and international levels.

The Austrian Government is considering to set up an Austrian Rule of Law Trust Fund to support international actors in strengthening the rule of law and to offer legal expertise or deploy legal experts free of charge to developing countries at their request.

International law and the rule of law are the foundations of the international system. Austria strongly believes that only an international system based on the rule of law can lead to lasting peace, security, economic development and social progress. This obviously is true in particular for the use of force which may only be applied in self-defense or if authorized by the UN Security Council.

In this spirit, let me confirm that Austria remains fully committed to an effective United Nations system.

In this connection I want to thank in particular Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts and commitment to peace, rule of law and human rights.

Thank you.
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The interdependence of today's world is particularly pertinent when we think about energy security, water and food supply. We are confronted with the growing energy demand of emerging economies, the increasing EU import dependence, regional conflicts resulting in market disruption, and the need for global action to address climate, environmental and competitiveness concerns.

Europe faces major challenges regarding energy supply security, market stability, affordability of energy and sustainability. New trends like the production of shale gas in the USA have changed the energy-map on global level and influence the industrial and economic development.

From this perspective, it is clear that transforming our energy systems will be key to attaining a sustainable and resource-efficient development of our economies. We have to transform the way how we produce, distribute and consume energy.

Europe has a special responsibility in engineering this energy transformation. It is essential to promote a new Europe-wide common energy architecture fit to serve the needs of Europe in 2050.

Energy transformation should not be limited to de-carbonisation. We need a sound balance of ensured security of supply, affordable energy and safe and sustainable technologies. We have to avoid taking today what belongs to future generations. We also have to choose socially acceptable ways and methods of transformation.

Europe must safeguard its competitive industries and continue to provide attractive work-places to its peoples through green growth. We must by all means avoid becoming a place of industrial decay or exodus with less abundant but more expensive energy. It is essential to discuss how the future economic structure in Europe should look like. From the economic crisis we have learned that countries with a high share of industry were less affected than others only relying on services. Europe needs to stay competitive!

From an Austrian perspective, improved energy efficiency needs to be combined with increasing proportions of renewables. Research and development are crucial to trigger new solutions, and to avoid regret options. From a technical point of view, it seems essential to make progress in the tricky question of power storage. New and smart grid development is necessary to allow progress on the renewables’ front.

318
It is crucial to create a well-integrated and functioning internal energy market in order to better achieve security of supply and competitive energy prices. Therefore not only the rules of the Third Energy Package need to be transposed but we have to increase the interconnections to allow a free flow of energy from East to West and North to South.

Volatile energies have led to a change in the market to an unprecedented extent. It is time to re-think our market-design to be fit for the future. At the same time we need to – as far as possible – rely on market mechanisms and only intervene in specific and justified cases to the necessary extent avoiding market distortion through a badly-designed support scheme.

Austria has invested a lot in renewables and efficiency and is well-developed in this regard:

We hold the first place in the EU regarding the share of renewables in power-consumption.

And we hold the third place regarding the share of renewables in our gross domestic energy consumption.

Regarding energy intensity – that is the amount of energy needed for the production of a GDP-unit – we have the fourth lowest level in the EU.

Austria has a remarkable potential in green technologies and an ambitious energy research programme. Certain solar thermic and solar voltaic products, as well as biomass equipment and heat pumps propel our exports, and some products hold significant shares in the EU-market.

While respecting the sovereign right of every country to choose its appropriate energy mix, we call for the phasing out of nuclear, as it is not safe nor sustainable nor climate-friendly. Taking into account the full fuel cycle from building the power plant to its final de-commissioning, moving and storing the waste, the carbon-foot-print is huge, the costs are exorbitant and future generations encumbered with incalculable mortgages. Accidents have a dreadfully disproportional impact on human life and environment, as tragically shown by the recent catastrophe of Fukushima.

This should also be taken into account when discussing the energy policy after 2020.

We welcome the fact that the European Commission has started the debate in form of a Greenbook and a public consultation. We need to make sure that there are clear guidelines on which investors can rely. In a future energy policy all mentioned aspects – from security of supply to safe and sustainable energy production and competitive energy prices – have to be included based on the lessons we learned from the 2020 goals.

Energy is a key to ensure vital human needs and development. Access to reliable energy services is a prerequisite for health services, education, clean water and food security for billions of people. Energy is more than a commercial commodity. It is a “special good”.

Selected Documents
The Millennium Development Goals as well as climate change challenges require international collective action. Energy policy must recognise the global need to address energy poverty and climate change simultaneously.

Austria, therefore, fully supports the initiative of the UN Secretary General on “Sustainable Energy 4 ALL”. This initiative calls for access to modern energy services, including electricity and clean cooking facilities, for ALL by 2030. At the same time it puts the focus on enhancing energy efficiency across all regions and on doubling the portion of renewables in the global end use. Vienna is hosting the Office of the Global Support Team which has been established to implement the initiative on sustainable energy. This new entity strengthens the energy hub in Vienna that is made up by so far eight international organisations dealing with energy-related matters, among them the International Atomic Energy Organization (IAEA), OPEC, UNIDO and the Energy Community. These organisations have created a forum for dialogue, the “Vienna Energy Club”, for the periodic informal exchange of views on energy. Thereby, broad knowledge and expertise is combined with global decision-making.

I am confident that Vienna can and will contribute forward-looking solutions to the global dialogue on energy.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Croatia for hosting this Conference and for putting Europe’s energy security on our agenda. We need to continue this discussion, and we need to act jointly.

Thank you.
Index

ADA 94, 95, 220, 221, 223, 241–243, 245, 250, 251, 288, 293
Adriatic-Ionian Initiative 74. see AII
Advice for Travellers Abroad 287
Afghanistan 54, 114, 124, 126, 130, 131, 133, 145, 147, 149, 153, 154, 170, 192, 226, 237, 298
AFISMA 108, 180
African-led International Support Mission to Mali. see AFISMA
African Union 54, 95, 99, 100, 112, 144, 205, 242. see AU
African Union Mission in Somalia 100. see AMISOM
Agriculture 21, 34, 35, 185, 220–222, 229, 243, 249
AII 74
Albania 60, 62, 81, 82, 85, 147, 150, 160, 237, 250, 251, 265, 266, 271, 297
Algeria 1, 54, 55, 97, 98
Alpine Convention 64, 164, 165, 195
Alps 65, 164, 165, 195
Al-Qaida 54, 180
AMISOM 96, 100, 101
Andorra 26, 158
Angola 102, 103
Anti-Corruption Academy 316
Anti-Personnel Mines 237
AÖWB 7
APPEAR 243, 245
Arab Peninsula 130
Arab Spring 56, 124, 128, 154, 166, 297
Argentina 6, 120, 211
Armenia 4, 54, 56, 57, 93, 94, 148, 150, 158, 160, 205, 220, 251, 265, 288, 297, 302
Arms Trade Treaty 166, 178, 238–240, 316. see ATT
ASEAN 58, 124, 125, 140
ASEF 124
ASEM 124
Asia 5, 57, 58, 87, 88, 96, 115, 124–126, 133, 136, 229, 280, 292
Asia-Europe Foundation 124. see ASEF
Asia Europe Meeting 124. see ASEM
Association Agreement 56, 62, 83, 87, 90–95, 120
Association of Southeast Asian Nations 140. see ASEAN
ATT 166, 167, 169, 239, 240
Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund 7
Australia 5, 6, 124, 140, 141, 184, 239, 252
Austria Institute 264, 277, 280, 293
Austria Libraries 264, 273–276, 280
Austrian Development Agency 241, 288, 291, 293. see ADA
Austrian Development Cooperation 92, 94, 95, 99, 100, 112, 144, 205, 242. see ADC
Austrian representations abroad 1, 2, 5, 216, 229, 276, 280, 285, 287, 293
Austrians abroad 1, 6–9
AU-UN hybrid operation in Darfur 101. see UNAMID
Azerbaijan 42, 50, 54, 56, 57, 93, 94, 148, 150, 160, 179, 188, 199, 207, 265
Bahrain 57, 130
Balkans 87, 115, 307
Bangladesh 57, 124, 136, 199
Banking union 66
Belarus 54, 56, 93, 132, 148, 154, 161, 200
Belgium 26, 154, 192, 245, 297
Belize 121, 122
Bhutan 136, 245, 249
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention 236. see BWC
Black Sea region 243, 265, 273, 296
Bolivia 121, 170, 184
BOMCA 126
Border Management in Central Asia 126. see BOMCA
Bosnia and Herzegovina 54, 60, 62, 64, 82, 83, 85–87, 145, 147, 151, 153, 160, 266
Brazil 36, 57, 58, 99, 120, 121, 136, 198, 200, 202, 212, 213, 225, 229, 230, 272, 297
BRIC states 76, 99
Brunei 125, 140, 185
Budget 244, 249, 288, 291
Bulgaria 42, 49, 64, 150, 160, 221, 265, 266, 273
Burgenländische Gemeinschaft 7
Burkina Faso 107, 109, 184, 194, 199, 247
Index

Burundi 104, 105, 182, 199
BWC 236

Cabo Verde 107
CABSI 126
CADAP 126
Cambodia 124, 137, 140, 184, 188, 200, 237
Canada 23, 51, 57, 58, 117, 118, 184, 252, 277
CAP 34
Caribbean 119, 120, 122, 222, 245, 246
CARICOM 246
Caucasus 87, 93, 94, 148, 161, 229, 252, 273
CCPCJ 171, 212
CDDH 207
CEDAW 210, 211
CEI 74, 80, 164
CELAC 119–122
Central African Republic 54, 95, 104, 111, 112, 166, 182, 199, 200, 217
Central America 120, 245, 246
Central Asia 87, 124, 126, 130, 131, 133, 147, 149, 152, 157, 192, 195, 229, 252, 273, 302
Central Asia Border Security Initiative 126. see CABSI
Central Asia Drug Action Programme 126. see CADAP
Central Emergency Response Fund 173, 223. see CERF
Central Europe 42, 63, 74, 77, 80, 115, 118, 164, 264, 265, 273, 274, 297
Central European Initiative 74, 80, 164. see CEI
CERF 173, 223
CERN 278
CETA 118
CFP 35
CFSP 17–19, 53, 54, 74, 142, 203
Chad 144, 223
Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union 204
Chemical Weapons Convention 191, 236. see CWC
Children’s rights. see Rights of the Child
Chile 119–121, 184
CIMIC 131
Civil-Military Co-operation 131. see CIMIC
CLRAE 162, 163
CMP 259
CND 170
CoE Steering Committee for Human Rights 207. see CDDH
Cohesion policy 28
COHOM 203, 204
Colombia 119, 120, 122, 184, 199, 205, 230, 293
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 209, 212. see CCPCJ
Commission on the Status of Women 202, 210. see CSW
Committee of Ministers 156–158, 160, 162, 163, 207
Committee of Permanent Representatives 23. see COREPER
Committee of the Regions 21. see CoR
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space 173. see COPUOS
Common Agricultural Policy 34, 226. see CAP
Common Fisheries Policy 35. see CFP
Common Foreign and Security Policy 17, 18, 53, 74, 203, 234. see CFSP
Common Market of the South. see MERCOSUR
Common Security and Defence Policy 53, 111, 142. see CSDP
Commonwealth of Independent States 146. see CIS
Community of Latin American and Caribbean States 119, 121. see CELAC
Competitiveness 30, 31, 33, 46, 47, 67
Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement 118. see CETA
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty 167, 191, 194, 235
Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization 191, 194. see CTBTO
Conference of Parties. see COP
Congress of the Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. see CLRAE
Consulate-General 116
Convention on Human Rights 160
Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research 278. see COST
COP 259, 261
COPUOS 173
Index

COREPER 23
COSME 30
COST 278
Costa Rica 120, 122, 123, 176, 230
Côte d’Ivoire 54, 107, 217
Cotonou Agreement 113
Council of Europe 75, 80, 87, 156, 158, 159, 161–163, 206, 208, 211, 213, 214, 216, 224, 251, 271
Council Presidency 15, 17, 35, 205
Council Secretariat 19, 20
Court of Justice of the European Union 20
CPT 161, 207
Croatia 10, 16, 18, 21, 57, 60, 64, 78, 85, 86, 164, 165, 182, 266, 275, 286, 318, 320
CSDP 53, 82, 84, 96, 97, 101, 102, 105, 109, 111, 127, 142–145
CSW 202
CTBT 191, 194, 235
CTBT Preparatory Commission 235. see CTBT PrepCom
Cuba 119, 122, 199
Cultural Forum 77, 267, 268, 271, 276
CWC 236
Cyprus 61, 67–69, 88, 168, 182, 227
Czech Republic 64, 78, 79, 263, 265
DAC 242–245, 256, 257
Danube area 296
Danube Commission 165. see DC
DARUM EUROPA 285, 305
Democracy 58, 154, 157, 158, 189, 197, 203, 204, 264, 297
Democratic People’s Republic of Korea 135
Democratic Republic of the Congo 54, 95, 96, 103–106, 144, 166, 181, 200, 217
Denmark 195, 207, 242
Development Assistance Committee. see DAC
Development cooperation 84
Development Cooperation Act 241, 244
Diplomatic Academy 216, 267, 283, 296, 297, 303
Djibouti 99, 101, 112, 145
Doha Round 225
Eastern Partnership 56, 90, 92–95, 157, 159
EBRD 232
ECB 66, 68
ECCAS 111, 112
ECHR 157, 163, 204, 206
ECJ 15, 16, 20, 180, 204
ECOFIN 26, 65
Economic and Financial Affairs Council. see ECOFIN
Economic and Monetary Union 10, 11, 24, 26, 65–67, 305
Economic Community of Central African States 111, 112. see ECCAS
Economic Community of West African States 111, 113, 242. see ECOWAS
ECOSOC 166, 170, 183
ECOWAS 108, 111, 113, 242, 243, 246
ECREEE 246
ECRI 161, 207
ECtHR 157, 160, 163, 206, 207, 213
Ecuador 184
Education 44, 46, 52, 64, 71, 78, 90, 94, 117, 158, 189, 214–216, 228, 242, 245, 269–274, 276–278, 282
EEA 59, 75
EEAS 2, 18–20, 143, 290, 297
EFSF 67, 68
EFTA 59, 75
Egypt 1, 54, 55, 57, 58, 96, 97, 128, 191, 232, 235
EIA 37, 79
EIDHR 204
El Salvador 120, 209
Embassies 293
EMBC 278
Employment 10, 26, 27, 67
EMU 65, 67
Energy 30, 36, 39, 41–43, 196, 243, 245, 246, 248, 261, 318–320
Energy policy 320
Enlargement 59, 60
ENP 54–56
ENPI 55
Environmental impact assessment. see EIA
EP 8, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 19, 24, 27, 29, 30, 32, 34, 36, 41, 44, 84, 253, 271
Equality 27, 101, 190, 226, 242
Erasmus 44, 276, 304
Index

ERDF 28
Eritrea 54, 99, 112, 200
ESA 47, 278
ESM 67, 69
Estonia 26, 207, 230
ETC. 28, 79, 81, 189, 197
Ethiopia 8, 98, 99, 112, 187, 209, 211, 237, 247
EUBAM 97, 128, 145
EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine. see EUBAM
EU Council 24, 26, 61, 63, 82, 203, 205, 240, 253
EU Council Working Party on Human Rights 203. see COHOM
EUFOR Althea 82, 144, 145
EU HR 17, 19, 54, 97, 124, 136
EUJUST LEX 130, 145
EUMETSAT 278
EUMM Georgia 145
EUNIC 116, 280
EUPOL Afghanistan 131, 145
EUPOL COPPS 127, 145
EURATOM 46, 262
Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council 154. see EAPC
EURODAC 48
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 232. see EBRD
European Central Bank 10, 66, 68
European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts 278. see ECMWF
European Commission against Racism and Intolerance 161, 207. see ECRI
European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment 161. see CPT
European Convention on Human Rights 157, 160, 204, 206. see ECHR
European Court of Auditors 16
European Court of Human Rights 62, 82, 91, 157, 206. see ECHR
European Economic Area 59. see EEA
European External Action Service 2, 18, 143, 208, 297. see EEAS
European Financial Stability Facility 67. see EFSF
European Forum Wachau 271
European Free Trade Association 59. see EFTA
European Globalisation Adjustment Fund 27
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights 204. see EIDHR
European Investment Bank 15
European Maritime and Fisheries Fund 35
European Molecular Biology Conference. see EMBC
European National Institutes for Culture 280. see EUNIC
European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 55. see ENPI
European Neighbourhood policy 54, 145
European Neighbourhood Policy. see ENP
European Organisation for Nuclear Research 278. see CERN
European Parliament 8, 11, 14, 16, 19, 22, 37, 43, 46, 49–51, 55, 66, 67, 253, 303, 304. see EP
European Regional Development Fund 28. see ERDF
European Single Supervisory Mechanism. see SSM
European Space Agency 47, 278. see ESA
European Space Policy Institute 278. see ESPI
European Stability Mechanism 10, 67. see ESM
European Territorial Co-operation 63
European Union 8, 10, 13–15, 24, 49, 51, 53, 57, 59, 70, 83, 84, 102, 156, 195, 203, 204, 223, 252, 279, 280, 285, 304, 305, 307, 308, 313. see EU; see EU
European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 195, 204. see FRA
Eurozone 65, 66, 68, 73, 77, 231
EUSDR 64
Index

EU Special Representative 101, 125, 203. see EUSR
EUSR 54
EU Townhall Meetings 305
EU Visa Information System. see VIS

FAO 185, 221
FDRF 220
Federal Council 16, 21–23, 59, 76, 162, 182
Federal Government 7, 14, 21, 23, 70, 115, 167, 181, 210, 244, 288, 292
Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology 64, 278.
Federal Ministry of Science and Research 278.
Female genital mutilation. see FGM
Financial transaction tax. see FTT
Finland 143, 155, 213, 245, 276, 293
Fiscal Compact 10, 24, 66
Fisheries 34, 35, 98
FMEIA 1–7, 9, 14, 19, 23, 64, 92, 144, 152, 160, 172, 178, 189, 192, 197, 210, 216, 220, 221, 224, 229, 238, 241, 245, 257, 264–266, 268–271, 274, 276, 278, 279, 281–293, 296
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. see FAO
Foreign and European Policy Report 287
Foreign Disaster Relief Fund 220. see FDRF
FRA 159, 195, 204
France 26, 53, 73, 108, 148, 162–164, 199, 234, 297
FREMP 203
FTT 26
Fukushima 46, 235, 262, 313, 314, 319
Fund for Austrians Abroad 7
Future Fund 268, 282, 283, 297

G8 73
G20 25, 73, 88, 121, 136, 140, 227, 229
Gender 151, 155, 190, 211, 242, 248, 250
Geneva Conference on Disarmament 235
Georgia 54–56, 89, 94, 95, 146, 148, 150, 160, 192, 205, 221, 229, 251, 265, 266, 288
Germany 6, 26, 41, 58, 64, 72, 73, 77, 163, 164, 188, 192, 198, 199, 201, 202, 213, 245, 262, 263, 266
Ghana 107

Global Monitoring for Environment and Security 279. see GMES
GMES 279
Great Lakes Region 104–106
GRECO 161
Greece 26, 42, 67, 68, 84, 143, 192, 207
GRETA 161, 207
Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings 207. see GRETA
Group of States against Corruption 161. see GRECO
Hague Code of Conduct 236
Hague Convention on Child Abduction. see HCCA
Haiti 122, 199
HCCA 4
Health 43, 189, 190, 255, 256
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 17, 18, 54, 142
HIV 255
Holocaust 81, 116, 117, 270, 282, 283
Holocaust education, remembrance and research 282
Horn of Africa 54, 95, 98, 99, 101, 145, 146, 223
Human rights 189, 215
Human Rights Council 74, 76, 167, 197, 198, 249, 299, 300, 310, 311, 317. see HRC
Human Rights Dialogue 125, 205, 206
Human trafficking 215
Hungary 42, 64, 80, 81, 164, 198, 201, 213, 221, 254, 263, 265, 275

IACA 167, 176, 195, 200
IAEA 140, 190, 194, 262, 312, 313, 320
IBRD 195
IBSA 121, 136
ICAO 187
ICC 102, 105, 107, 167, 177, 178, 180, 217, 218, 300
Index

Iceland 59–62
ICIMOD 249
ICJ 121, 122, 177, 184
ICRC 221, 223, 224
ICT 9, 36, 50, 288, 292
ICTR 177
ICTY 177
IFRC 221
IHRA 116, 282
IIASA 278
ILC 174–176, 186
ILO 185, 186
ILUC 37, 38
IMF 67–69, 82, 100, 230, 231
IMO 39, 192
India 57, 58, 99, 118, 121, 125, 136, 138, 140, 191, 205, 225, 229, 230, 234, 235, 260
Indonesia 57, 125, 137, 140, 200, 205, 225, 229, 230, 254
Information and communication technology. see ICT
Information for All 189
Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance. see IPA
International Anti-Corruption Academy 167, 176, 195, 200, 316. see IACA
International Atomic Energy Agency 190, 194, 262, 312. see IAEA
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 195. see IBRD
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development 249. see ICIMOD
International Civil Aviation Organization 187. see ICAO
International Committee of the Red Cross 221, 223. see ICRC
International Court of Justice 121, 122, 177, 184. see ICJ
International Criminal Court 100, 105, 167, 177, 199, 217, 300, 315. see ICC
International Energy Agency 230. see IEA
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies 221. see IFRC
International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance 116, 282
International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis 278. see IIASA
International King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Center for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue 195. see KAICIID
International Labour Organization. see ILO
International Law Commission 174, 175. see ILC
International Maritime Organization 39, 192. see IMO
International Monetary Fund 67, 82, 100, 230. see IMF
International Organization for Migration 192, 195. see IOM
International Peace Institute 195. see IPI
International Security Assistance Force 126, 130, 154. see ISAF
International Telecommunications Union 186. see ITU
IOM 192, 193, 195, 216
IPA 60, 82
IPI 195
Iran 1, 20, 53, 54, 57, 89, 124, 128, 129, 190, 191, 199, 201, 206, 235
Iraq 20, 54, 57, 127, 130, 145, 212, 296
Ireland 17, 67–69, 143, 155, 208, 276, 282
ISAF 126, 130, 131, 133, 154
Israel 54, 55, 87, 114, 127, 157, 184, 191, 199, 234, 235, 250, 276, 278, 283, 315
Italy 8, 26, 42, 70, 73, 74, 151, 154, 164, 195, 262, 268, 274
ITF 116, 282
ITU 186
Japan 4, 20, 28, 57, 58, 114, 118, 124–126, 134, 135, 140, 158, 184, 194, 235, 237, 260, 274, 276
Jordan 51, 54–56, 58, 157, 172, 199, 204, 220, 232, 283

KAICIID 195, 281, 297
KAIPTC 246
Kazakhstan 93, 126, 131–133, 149, 151, 157, 205, 226, 229, 296
KFOR 83, 84, 154
Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center 246. see KAIPTC
Kosovo 54, 60, 62, 63, 83–87, 144, 145, 147, 154, 182, 204, 209, 250, 256, 266
Kyoto Protocol 39
Kyrgyzstan 57, 126, 131–133, 149, 211
Index

LAC  119, 120
Laos  140, 226
Latin America  57, 88, 96, 119, 120, 122, 201, 229, 256
Latin America and the Caribbean  119, 120.  see LAC
Latvia  65, 66, 230
Lebanon  54, 55, 127, 220, 237
Liberia  54, 108, 182, 254
Libya  1, 54, 55, 97, 145, 146, 199, 217, 237
Liechtenstein  4, 26, 59, 75, 78, 164, 198, 201, 213, 251, 266, 278, 293
Lithuania  11, 17, 56, 230
Luxembourg  15, 17, 26, 35, 180, 227, 245
Macedonia  60, 62, 63, 84, 85, 147, 150, 160, 242, 266
Madagascar  95, 103, 104, 113, 204, 260
Main Committee  22, 23
Malawi  103, 113
Malaysia  125, 137, 140, 199, 260
Maldives  1, 136, 137
Mali  95, 97, 107–109, 111–113, 143, 146, 166, 174, 180, 189, 199, 204, 217, 220–229, 298, 299
Malta  155, 168, 192, 199
Mauretania  56, 111
MDG  185, 253, 255
Media  53, 150, 151, 158, 211, 213, 284, 297
Mediterranean region  54, 74, 147, 157, 280
MERCOSUR  119, 123
Mexico  8, 57, 119, 120, 122, 123, 169, 199, 213, 234, 239, 297
MIC  221
Middle East  5, 20, 53, 54, 74, 87, 88, 114, 124, 127, 155, 166–168, 223, 235, 292, 296, 315
Middle East Peace Process  54, 114, 166
MIGA  195
Migration  50, 92, 151, 192, 193, 216, 228
Millennium Development Goals  166, 167, 169, 232, 253–255, 314, 320
Minorities  151, 161, 201, 202, 207, 213, 214
MINURSO  111, 182
MINUSMA  108, 166, 174, 180
MINUSTAH  122
Moldova  5, 50, 54, 56, 57, 64, 92, 148, 153, 160, 192, 205, 207, 211, 216, 251, 265
Monaco  26, 160, 164
Mongolia  135, 150, 267
Monitoring and Information Centre  221.  see MIC
Montenegro  60–62, 64, 85, 147, 150, 154, 160, 199, 266, 296, 297
MONUSCO  105, 181
Morocco  50, 55, 58, 97, 98, 111, 157, 200, 232
Mozambique  103, 113, 221, 249, 257, 260
Multiannual Financial Framework  10, 24, 26, 253
Multilateral Development Banks  231
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency  195.  see MIGA
Municipal Councillors for European Affairs  286
Music  269
Myanmar  54, 138, 140, 186, 199, 201, 203, 205
Nabucco  42
National Council  16, 21–24, 56, 71, 132, 150, 154, 162, 182, 219
National Fund  282
NATO  73, 83–85, 87, 95, 131, 144, 149, 154, 155, 299
Neighbourhood Policy  54–56
NEPAD  172
Nepal  136, 138, 204, 211, 212
Netherlands  8, 77, 213, 245, 293
New Partnership for Africa’s Development.  see NEPAD
New Zealand  140, 141, 184, 239
Nicaragua  57, 120, 122, 123, 184, 209, 245, 246
Niger  57, 111, 143, 145, 184
Nigeria  57, 109–111, 192, 199
North Atlantic Treaty Organization.  see NATO
Norway  2, 35, 57, 59, 151, 155, 163, 169, 178, 198, 201, 202, 207, 213, 214, 234, 313
NPT  190, 234, 235
NSG  239
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty  190.  see NPT
Nuclear Suppliers Group  239.  see NSG
Nuclear weapons  316

OCHA  222
Index

ODA  244, 252, 256
ODIHR  62, 132, 148–150, 154
OECD  26, 58, 88, 226–230, 241–246, 256
OECD Development Assistance Committee  244, 245, 256.  see DAC
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights  148, 150, 159.  see ODIHR
Office for Outer Space Affairs  173.  see OOSA
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs  220, 222, 246.  see OCHA
Official Development Assistance  244, 252, 256.  see ODA
OFID  195
OIC  201, 208
OOSA  173
OPCW  129, 191, 236
OPEC  195, 248, 320
OPEC Fund for International Development  195, 248.  see OFID
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons  129, 182, 191, 236.  see OPCW
Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.  see OECD
Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe  94, 95, 126, 194, 216.  see OSCE
Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries  195.  see OPEC
OSCE  62, 75, 84, 91–95, 115, 126, 132, 144–154, 159, 194, 207, 208, 214, 216, 296
Oslo Convention  238
Österreich Institut  277
Ottawa Convention  237, 238
PACE  162, 163
Pakistan  57, 138, 181, 191, 192, 204, 212, 234, 235
Palestinian Authority  154
Palestinian territories  145
Papua New Guinea  141
Paraguay  123, 204
Parliamentary Assembly  56, 80, 146, 150, 153, 162, 213
Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  80, 162.  see PACE
Partnership for Peace  154, 299.  see PfP
PBC  182
PCIs  40
Peacekeeping operations.  see PKO
Permanent Representation  15, 181, 293
Peru  20, 119, 120, 123, 293
PfP  83, 154
Philippines  1, 8, 57, 125, 138, 140, 181, 220, 221, 260
PIF  141
Piracy  111
PKO  174, 180, 181
Plenary  133, 173, 218
PNR  51
Poland  73, 200, 263, 265, 275, 276, 293
Political and Security Committee  54.  see PSC
Portugal  26, 67, 68
Post-2015 Development Agenda  166, 254, 314
Poverty  27, 247, 249, 253
Press Officers’ Meeting  287
Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict  177
PSC  54
Publications  287
Qatar  57
RAMSI  141
REACH  32
Reconciliation  283
REFIT  29
Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands  141.  see RAMSI
Republic of Korea  57, 135, 205, 279
Research  46, 47, 61, 90, 149, 188, 189, 197, 242, 245, 263, 270, 274, 277, 282, 318
Rights of the Child  209
RIO+20  38, 170, 244, 253, 254, 258, 260
Roma  80, 91, 150–152, 214, 251, 282
Romania  49, 64, 235, 265, 266, 275
Rome Statute  217
Rwanda  106, 112, 173, 177
SAARC  136
SADC  104, 113, 243, 248
Safety  31, 36, 156, 158, 212, 262, 263

328
Index

Safety of journalists 156, 158
Sanctions Committee 180
San Marino 26
Schengen Representation Agreement 4
Schengen visa 4
SE4All 167, 195, 243, 246, 261
Security 18, 37, 47, 83, 90, 102, 113, 122, 126, 135, 142–146, 149, 152–155, 168, 177–180, 185, 190, 208, 210, 242, 248, 298, 299, 312, 313, 315, 317, 318
Senegal 110, 199
Serbia 42, 54, 60, 62–64, 83, 85, 86, 146, 147, 160, 199, 226, 239, 266, 282
Services Directive 34
Seychelles 101, 145, 226, 227
Sierra Leone 110, 182, 196, 257, 293
Singapore 58, 124, 150, 185
Slovakia 26, 53, 64, 76, 77, 79, 263, 265, 267, 272, 275, 297
Slovenia 26, 42, 64, 77, 78, 143, 164, 251, 263, 266, 273, 282
SMA I 28
SMA II 28
Small Arms and Light Weapons 152, 153
Solomon Islands 141
Somalia 54, 95, 96, 99–101, 106, 112, 144–146, 200, 221, 222, 244
South Africa 5, 6, 104, 121, 136, 205, 229, 230, 276
South Caucasus 54, 211, 243, 251, 296, 302
South East Europe 55, 78, 81, 146, 147, 161, 163, 164, 192, 195, 211, 216, 231, 232, 250, 252, 278, 296
Southern African Development Community 113, 243. see SADC
South Sudan 1, 54, 95, 101, 102, 104, 106, 112, 145, 166, 185, 200, 212
South Tyrol 70–72
Spain 8, 26, 67–69, 207, 301, 316
Special Envoy 108
Special Representative 101, 105, 151, 167, 179, 180, 196, 202, 208, 261, 271, 315
Sri Lanka 136, 139, 199, 297
SRM 66
SSM 66
SST 47
Stockholm Programme 47
Strategy for the Danube Region 64, 165, 265. see EUSDR
Structural reform 69
Sudan 54, 95, 101, 102, 104, 106, 112, 200, 217, 223
Sustainability 258
Sustainable Development Goals 169, 254, 255
Sustainable Energy for All 167, 195, 243, 246, 261, 315. see SE4All
Sweden 58, 155, 192, 282
Switzerland 2, 4, 6, 26, 57, 59, 75, 76, 78, 146, 155, 164, 198, 201, 212, 213, 218, 224, 245, 262, 263, 266, 293
TAIEX 55
Tajikistan 20, 126, 132, 133, 149, 150, 157, 221, 226
Tanzania 101, 112, 113, 145, 185, 260
Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research. see ITF
TEN 36
Terrorism Prevention Branch 171. see TPB
TFEU 25, 47, 57, 279
Theatre 269
Timor-Leste 108, 139, 184
Tourism 28, 33, 34, 165, 249
Toxin weapons. see BWC
TPB 171
TPP 115
Traduki 265, 266
Trans-Atlantic relations 115
Trans-European Networks 36, 39. see TEN
Transnistria 92, 146, 148, 251
Trans-Pacific Partnership 115, 118. see TPP
Transport 30, 36
Treaty of Lisbon 17, 21, 142, 203, 206
Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union 23, 25, 47, 57, 279. see TFEU
TTIP 115
TUGSAT-1 173
Tunisia 51, 54, 55, 58, 98, 157, 232
Turkmenistan 57, 126, 132, 133, 149, 205
Twitter 2, 117, 284
Index

Uganda 8, 95, 106, 112, 209, 211, 217, 219, 243, 247, 260
UK 234
Ukraine 1, 5, 50, 54–57, 64, 90–93, 131, 146, 148, 151, 157, 160, 205, 262, 265, 266, 273
UNAMA 130
UNAMID 101
UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan 130. see UNAMA
UNASUR 123
UN Capital Development Fund 256. see UNCDF
UNCCD 261
UNCDF 256
UNCITRAL 175, 176
UN Commission on International Trade Law 175. see UNCITRAL
UNDOF 181
UNEP 256
UNFCCC 259
UNFPA 256
UNESCO 187–189, 198, 212, 214, 255, 279
UN General Assembly 166, 176, 216, 311. see UNGA
UNHCR 179, 222
UN High Commissioner for Refugees 173, 222. see UNHCR
UNHRC 74
UNIBRITE 173
UNICEF 209, 251, 255
UNIDO 123, 186, 194, 196, 243, 261, 316, 320
UNIFIL 181
UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone 110. see UNIPSIL
UN Interim Force in Lebanon 181. see UNIFIL
UN Interim Security Force for Abyei 101. see UNISFA
UNISFA 110
UNISIL 110
UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara 111, 182. see MINURSO
UN Mission in Kosovo 84. see UNMIK
UN Mission in Liberia 108
UNMission in South Sudan 102. see UNMISS
UNODA 195, 313
UNODC 170, 171, 194, 200, 216, 248
UN Office for Disarmament Affairs 195. see UNODA
UN Office on Drugs and Crime 216. see UNODC
UNOV 194
United Arab Emirates 4, 199
United Kingdom 6, 179, 278. see UK
United Nations Children’s Fund. see UNICEF
United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice 171. see CCPCJ
United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs 170. see CND
United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification 261. see UNCCD
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force. see UNDOF
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe 183. see UNECE
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 187. see UNESCO
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 259. see UNFCCC
United Nations General Assembly 197. see UNGA
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 222. see UNHCR
United Nations Industrial Development Organization 186, 194. see UNIDO
United Nations Secretary-General. see UNSG
Index

UN Peacebuilding Commission 182. see PBC
UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response 173. see UN-SPIDER
UN Population Fund 256. see UNFPA
UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East 223. see UNRWA
UNRWA 223, 250
UNSAM 101
UN Women 178, 210, 211, 310
UPR 197, 199
Uruguay 119, 123
USA 4, 6, 28, 57, 58, 73, 76, 82, 89, 92, 111, 113–117, 129, 134, 135, 137, 140, 148, 151, 157, 158, 161, 178, 184, 188, 191, 202, 205, 212, 225, 234, 235, 252, 260, 267, 276, 277, 279, 285, 297, 318
Uzbekistan 126, 132, 133, 149, 199, 205

VCDNP 195
Venezuela 57, 119, 123
Venice Commission 80, 157
Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation 195. see VCDNP

Vietnam 57, 58, 125, 140, 205, 260
VIS 5, 292
Visa facilitation 57

WA 239
Wassenaar Arrangement 239. see WA
West Africa 107, 170, 216, 246, 249
Western Balkans 54, 60, 62, 76, 145, 155, 243, 250, 264, 265, 296
Western Sahara 111
WFP 221, 222
WHO 189, 190, 201, 208
WMO 191
Women 163, 172, 178, 179, 190, 198, 210, 211, 216, 242, 269, 289, 299
World Bank 105, 109, 195, 232, 233, 241
World Food Programme 221, 222. see WFP
World Health Organization 189. see WHO
World Meteorological Organization 191
World Trade Organization. see WTO
WTO 75, 90, 121, 225, 226, 228

Yemen 1, 130, 226

Zambia 238
Zangger Committee 239. see ZC
ZC 239
Zimbabwe 54, 95, 104, 113, 293
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