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Assistance services available to Austrian citizens abroad are detailed on the homepage of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs at www.bmeia.gv.at under “Service”.
Austrian Foreign Policy
Yearbook

2008

Report by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
Proprietor and Publisher:
Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
A-1014 Vienna, Minoritenplatz 8
Austria

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Printed by:
Manz Crossmedia GmbH & Co KG
A-1051 Vienna, Stolberggasse 26
Austria

The original German version is available at:
www.bmeia.gv.at,
or in printed form in the Information Management, Documentation, Knowledge Management Department at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
In 2008, the international community faced a number of very special challenges, ranging from the global economic crisis and the problems of the European energy supply at the beginning of the year to the conflicts in Georgia and Gaza.

It was against this difficult backdrop that Austria submitted its candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, and in October the General Assembly expressed its confidence in our country in the very first round of voting. Austria will thus serve as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period 2009-2010. Our work in the Security Council will focus on issues that have always been at the heart of our active involvement within the United Nations: the consistent and systematic commitment to human rights and the rule of law, to intercultural and interfaith dialogue as well as to disarmament and non-proliferation.

In 2008, Austria hosted the international conference “Europe and the Arab World - Connecting Partners in Dialogue” that convened in Vienna. In a joint initiative with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Amre Moussa, I invited representatives of the 27 EU Member States, the 22 nations of the League of Arab States and Turkey as well as experts from the fields of politics, civil society, science and culture to discuss among other topics the role of young people and women as well as ways of dealing with the dynamic pluralism of society today.

During difficult times in particular, the vital importance of Austria’s membership in the European Union becomes manifest. Indeed, our citizens positively acknowledged the decisive and coordinated approach taken by the Union and its Member States to meet the economic crisis. Nevertheless, a certain scepticism towards the EU is still perceptible in Austria. I therefore intend to get to the bottom of this scepticism and am thus planning to travel across Austria on an “EU listening tour” in 2009. Developing responsible policies for the future calls for far-sightedness, focussing on the aftermath of the current crisis. In the Danube and Black
Sea regions, for instance, an area with huge potential for dynamic development is opening up for us. With this in mind, deepening existing political, economic, cultural and interpersonal ties with this region represents one of the priorities on Austria’s foreign policy agenda.

Through its international cultural policy Austria is engaged in cultural dialogue with many states on a daily basis. We have a global network of 30 cultural forums, 54 Austria Libraries, nine language institutes, special cooperation offices in Lviv, Sarajevo and Washington as well as our embassies and consulates general, which also play an active role in our cultural activities abroad. With its missions and goals, Austria’s international cultural policy has long ceased to merely represent the past, but is, quite on the contrary, an important window to the future.

In order to shape a common, peaceful future, Austria also plays an active role in the framework of Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe. The most important goals of these activities are combating poverty in developing countries, safeguarding peace and human security as well as protecting the environment and preserving natural resources. The fundamental principles on which this work is based are recognition of the partner countries’ responsibility for their own development, respect for cultural and social parameters, gender equality, the involvement of women in decision-making processes and consideration of children and persons with disabilities.

Ensuring the safety and security of Austrians abroad as well as providing them with the best-possible support is a matter of particular concern to me. The Citizens’ Help Desk at the Ministry and some 100 embassies and professional consulates worldwide provide our fellow citizens with a widespread international safety net. Ministry staff are available around the clock to offer assistance in the event of consular emergencies. In 2008, we helped Austrians in more than 117,000 such cases, handling up to 1,000 calls a day during peak times.

To help citizens prepare for a stay abroad, the Foreign Ministry’s homepage offers detailed and constantly updated travel information on every nation in the world. In addition, the Foreign Ministry is offering a list of emergency telephone numbers for travellers abroad. This “emergency card” can be ordered from the Foreign Ministry or printed from the Ministry’s homepage. Like a passport, it should be carried by every Austrian during foreign travel.
I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to my predecessor, Ursula Plassnik, who has left her positive and lasting mark in many areas, and to State Secretary Hans Winkler, for his outstanding achievements especially in furthering international law and in development cooperation. I would also like to thank Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle as well as all the employees at headquarters in Vienna and at the Austrian missions and representations abroad for their dedication and hard work on a daily basis in the service of their country and their fellow citizens.

Dr. Michael Spindelegger
Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
Table of Contents

Preface .......................................................................................................................... III
List of Acronyms .......................................................................................................... XV

A. Austria in the European Union .............................................................................. 1
   I. The Financial Crisis and the Response by the European Union ...................... 1
      1. The Origins of the Crisis ........................................................................ 1
      2. The European Union’s Rapid and Coordinated Crisis Management ............ 2
      3. The Coordinated Stimulation of Europe’s Economy .................................. 3
   II. The Enlargement of the European Union ......................................................... 3
      1. Croatia and Turkey .............................................................................. 4
      2. Bulgaria and Romania .......................................................................... 5
      3. The European Perspective of the Western Balkan Countries ................. 5
      4. The External Aid Programmes and Administrative Partnerships of the European Union .............................................................. 6
      5. Regional Cooperation in South Eastern Europe ..................................... 7
   III. The Ratification Process of the Treaty of Lisbon ............................................. 7
      1. The Ratification Procedure in Austria .................................................... 7
      2. The Ratification Procedure in the Other EU Member States ................... 9
   IV. European Information Activities ...................................................................... 10
   V. The Policies of the European Union ................................................................. 12
      1. Austria’s Role in the European Institutions ........................................... 12
      3. Economy and Finance .......................................................................... 16
      4. Employment and Social Policy ................................................................ 16
      5. Structural and Cohesion Policy ............................................................... 17
      6. Single Market ....................................................................................... 18
      7. Common Agricultural Policy ................................................................... 18
      8. Transport .............................................................................................. 19
      9. Environment .......................................................................................... 20
     10. Energy .................................................................................................. 21
     11. Education and Youth ............................................................................. 21
     12. Research ............................................................................................. 22
     14. Combating Terrorism ......................................................................... 24
   VI. The European Union’s External Relations ....................................................... 25
Table of Contents

1. The Common Foreign and Security Policy ........................................ 25
2. The European Neighbourhood Policy ............................................. 31
3. South Eastern Europe / Western Balkans ....................................... 32
4. The Eastern European States ..................................................... 38
5. Russia ....................................................................................... 42
6. Central Asia ................................................................................ 43
7. Near and Middle East, the Mediterranean and the Gulf States ........ 44
8. North America ............................................................................ 49
9. Latin America and the Caribbean .................................................. 54
10. Sub-Saharan Africa ....................................................................... 59
11. Asia ............................................................................................ 65
12. Australia, New Zealand, Oceania .................................................. 72

B. Austria in Other European Fora ....................................................... 74
   I. European Security Policy ........................................................... 74
      1. The Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace ............................................. 74
      2. Debate about Future European Security Architecture ............................................................... 75
      3. Debate about US Missile Defence Bases in Europe .................................................................... 75
   II. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe ................. 76
      1. The Debate on the Future of Security in Europe ................................................................. 76
      2. Regional Issues and Field Activities ..................................................................................... 76
      3. The OSCE’s Human Dimension ......................................................................................... 80
      4. The OSCE’s Politico-Military Dimension ......................................................................... 81
      5. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension ..................................................... 81
      6. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly .................................................................................... 82
   III. Council of Europe ......................................................................... 82
      1. Political Developments ................................................................................................. 82
      2. Relationship with other International Organisations ......................................................... 83
      3. Human Rights .............................................................................................................. 84
      4. Monitoring .................................................................................................................. 84
      5. Assistance Programmes .......................................................................................... 85
      6. Organs of the Council of Europe ..................................................................................... 86
      7. The Council of Europe and Austria ............................................................................... 87
   IV. Central European Initiative ........................................................... 87
   V. Neighbourhood Policy ..................................................................... 88
      1. Regional Partnership .................................................................................................... 88
# Table of Contents

2. Switzerland, Liechtenstein .................................................... 89  
3. South Tyrol ............................................................................ 91  
4. Nuclear Safety ........................................................................ 92  
5. Alpine Convention .................................................................. 93  
6. Cooperation in the Danube Region and the Black Sea Region ........................................................................ 93  

C. The Legal and Consular Dimension of Austrian Foreign Policy .... 96  
   I. General Legal and Consular Issues ........................................ 96  
      1. Citizens’ Help Desk .............................................................. 96  
      2. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management ............................... 97  
      3. Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters ............................... 98  
      4. New Treaties ....................................................................... 98  
   II. Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic ........................................... 98  
      1. Visas ................................................................................... 98  
      2. Border Treaties ................................................................. 100  
   III. Social, Labour and Health Policy .......................................... 101  
   IV. Austrians Abroad .................................................................. 102  
      1. Organisations representing Austrians Abroad ..................... 102  
      2. Support for Austrian Citizens Abroad ................................. 103  
      3. Participation by Austrians Abroad in Elections in Austria and in the European Union ............................................... 103  

D. Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe ........................................................................ 105  
   I. Introduction ........................................................................... 105  
      1. International Background .................................................... 105  
      2. Legal Basis ........................................................................... 105  
      3. Budget for Development Cooperation .................................... 105  
      4. Sustainable Development ..................................................... 106  
      5. Policy Coherence for Development ....................................... 106  
   II. Bilateral Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe................................................................. 106  
      1. Bilateral Development Cooperation – South .......................... 106  
      2. Bilateral Development Cooperation with Eastern Europe .... 110  
      3. Themes und Sectors ............................................................ 111  
      4. Co-financing ...................................................................... 114
Table of Contents

5. Evaluation........................................................................................................... 115

III. Multilateral Development Cooperation................................................................. 115
   1. United Nations ................................................................................................. 116
   2. European Union ............................................................................................... 117
   3. Assignments Completed by Young Austrians..................................................... 119

IV. Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief and International Humanitarian Organisations ................................................................. 119
   1. Austrian Bilateral Humanitarian Aid ................................................................. 119
   2. Austrian Multilateral Humanitarian Aid ............................................................ 121

E. Global Cooperation – The United Nations............................................................... 124
   I. Introduction ........................................................................................................ 124
   II. The United Nations General Assembly ................................................................. 124
       1. Procedural Matters ......................................................................................... 124
       2. Political Affairs ............................................................................................. 125
       3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs ....................................... 127
       4. Human Rights .............................................................................................. 127
       5. Drug Control and Crime Prevention ............................................................... 127
       6. Social Policy .................................................................................................. 128
       7. International Women’s Affairs ...................................................................... 128
       8. Humanitarian Affairs .................................................................................... 128
       9. Peaceful Uses of Outer Space ....................................................................... 128
      10. Administrative and Budgetary Affairs ............................................................ 129
      11. International Law ......................................................................................... 129

   III. The United Nations Security Council .............................................................. 131
       1. Introduction..................................................................................................... 131
       2. The Reform Debate ....................................................................................... 132
       3. The Work of the UN Security Council .......................................................... 132
       4. Peacekeeping Operations .............................................................................. 140

IV. The UN Peacebuilding Commission ....................................................................... 141

V. The Economic and Social Council ......................................................................... 141
   1. General Information ........................................................................................ 141
   2. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ........................................... 142

VI. The International Court of Justice ......................................................................... 142

VII. The United Nations Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations ..................... 142
    1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ................................ 142
    2. International Labour Organization .................................................................... 143
# Table of Contents

3. International Telecommunication Union................................. 143
4. International Fund for Agricultural Development ................. 144
5. International Civil Aviation Organization ............................ 144
6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ......................................................... 144
7. World Health Organization.................................................. 145
8. International Atomic Energy Agency .................................... 146
9. World Tourism Organization .............................................. 146
10. Universal Postal Union .................................................... 147
11. World Meteorological Organization ................................. 147

F. Global Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery ........... 148
   I. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Weapons of Mass Destruction ................................................................. 148
      1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons ........ 148
      2. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty ....................... 149
      3. Geneva Conference on Disarmament .......................... 149
      4. Chemical Weapons Convention ......................................... 150
      5. Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention ................. 150
      6. Ballistic Missiles .................................................. 150
   II. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Conventional Weapons ........................................................................ 151
       1. Anti-Personnel Mines .................................................. 151
       2. Cluster Munitions ..................................................... 151
       3. Small Arms and Light Weapons ........................................ 152
   III. Export Control Regimes .................................................. 152
       1. Multilateral Export Control Regimes .......................... 152
       2. National Export Controls ............................................ 153

G. The International Protection of Human Rights ....................... 155
   I. Introduction .................................................................................. 155
   II. Human Rights in the European Union ..................................... 155
       1. EU Human Rights Policy .................................................. 155
       2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues .............................. 158
   III. Human Rights in the United Nations ................................ ...... 159
       1. The Human Rights Council ............................................ 160
       2. The General Assembly .................................................. 162
       3. Commission on the Status of Women ............................ 163
       4. Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 163
# Table of Contents

IV. Human Rights in the OSCE .......................................................... 164  
V. Human Rights in the Council of Europe ........................................ 164  
VI. The Human Security Network ...................................................... 164  
VII. Priorities ........................................................................................ 165  
1. Human Rights of Children ......................................................... 165  
2. Human Rights of Women ............................................................ 166  
3. Fighting Racism ............................................................................ 167  
4. Protection of Minorities ............................................................... 167  
5. Internally Displaced Persons ........................................................ 168  
6. Human Rights Education ............................................................. 168  
7. International Humanitarian Law ................................................... 169  
H. The Humanitarian Dimension in International Relations .......... 170  
I. Migration and Refugee Issues ......................................................... 170  
1. Migration and Refugee Movements ............................................ 170  
2. Migration and Refugee Policy in Austria .................................... 170  
3. The International Organization for Migration ............................ 171  
II. International Drug Control ........................................................... 171  
III. International Crime Prevention .................................................. 172  
IV. The International Criminal Court ............................................... 174  
I. Multilateral Economic Policy ......................................................... 176  
I. The World Trade Organization ...................................................... 176  
II. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 177  
1. International Economy and Finances ........................................... 177  
2. Austria’s Priorities within the OECD ......................................... 178  
3. OECD Council at Ministerial Level .......................................... 178  
4. Specific Surveys of Austria ........................................................ 178  
5. Selected Publications ................................................................. 179  
6. International Energy Agency ....................................................... 180  
J. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy ...................... 181  
I. Follow-up to the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development .................................................. 181  
II. The United Nations Environment Programme ............................ 181  
III. Global Environmental Protection Agreements .......................... 181  
K. International Cultural Policy ......................................................... 184  
I. Priorities ......................................................................................... 184  
XII
# Table of Contents

1. Selected International Cultural Policy Projects .................. 184  
2. International Cultural Policy Initiatives .............................. 188  
3. Grants for Cultural Projects .............................................. 188  

II. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science ...... 190  
III. Austria Libraries ............................................................. 190  
IV. Science, Education and Language ...................................... 191  
  1. Science and Education .................................................. 191  
  2. Language ...................................................................... 193  
V. International Sporting Relations .......................................... 193  
VI. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation ............... 194  
VII. International Cultural Policy at the European Union level .... 195  
VIII. Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue .......................... 197  
  1. Austria’s Contribution to Strengthening Dialogue .............. 197  
  2. Anna Lindh Foundation ................................................ 198  
  3. ASEM Interfaith Dialogue ............................................. 198  

L. Media and Information ...................................................... 200  
  I. Public Relations Activities of the Federal Ministry for European  
     and International Affairs ............................................... 200  
     1. General .................................................................... 200  
     2. Internet .................................................................. 200  
     3. Publications ............................................................ 201  
     4. Press Conferences and Events .................................... 201  
     5. Press Officers’ Conference ........................................ 201  

M. The Austrian Foreign Service ............................................. 202  
  I. Introduction .................................................................... 202  
  II. Working at the Foreign Ministry ...................................... 202  
  III. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget at a Glance ...................... 205  
  IV. Worldwide Infrastructure ................................................ 206  
     1. Facility Management, Real Estate and Construction ....... 206  
     2. Information and Communication Technology ............ 206  
     3. Information Management – Knowledge Management .... 207  
  V. Missions Abroad – Honorary Consulates .......................... 207  
  VI. Specialised Attaché(e)s .................................................. 208  
  VII. Organisational Structure ............................................. 210  

Index .................................................................................. 212
**List of Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>Austrian Business Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>ABIS</td>
<td>Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Switzerland [ICAO Group of States]</td>
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<td>ACO</td>
<td>Allied Command for Operations</td>
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<td>ACF</td>
<td>Austrian Cultural Forum</td>
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<td>ACP</td>
<td>African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
<td>Austrian Development Agency</td>
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<td>ADAM</td>
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<td>AIT</td>
<td>Asian Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>ALDE</td>
<td>Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe [Council of Europe]</td>
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<td>AMIS</td>
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<td>AMMM</td>
<td>Aceh Monitoring Mission</td>
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**List of Acronyms**

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<td>Asia-Europe Meeting</td>
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<td>Asylgesetz Federal Law on Asylum</td>
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<td>ATAU</td>
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<td>Turkish Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation in Austria</td>
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<td>Action against Terrorism Unit</td>
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<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<td>AUC</td>
<td>Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia United Self-Defence Forces of Colombia</td>
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<td>Austrian Contingent</td>
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<td>Austrian Battalion</td>
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<td>Außenhandelsgesetz Foreign Trade Act</td>
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<td>Außenhandelsverordnung Foreign Trade Regulation</td>
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<td>BAT/BEP</td>
<td>Best Available Techniques/Best Environmental Practice</td>
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XVI
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<tr>
<td>BMeiA</td>
<td>Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten (Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>BMD</td>
<td>Ballistic Missile Defense</td>
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<td>BOMCA</td>
<td>Border Management in Central Asia</td>
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<td>BONUCA</td>
<td>United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic</td>
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<td>BSEC</td>
<td>Black Sea Economic Cooperation</td>
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<td>BTWC</td>
<td>Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention</td>
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<td>Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction</td>
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<td>BYuT</td>
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<td>Central Asia Drug Action Programme</td>
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<td>CAFTA</td>
<td>Central American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>CALC</td>
<td>Cumbre de América Latina y del Caribe sobre integración y desarrollo (Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean on Integration and Development)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAN</td>
<td>Comunidad Andina (Andean Community)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAP</td>
<td>Corrective Action Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARDAS</td>
<td>Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARICOM</td>
<td>Caribbean Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CARIFORUM</td>
<td>Forum of the Caribbean ACP States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Convention on Biological Diversity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBRN</td>
<td>Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCAD</td>
<td>Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo (Central American Commission on Environment and Development)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCM</td>
<td>Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of the Revolution [Tanzania])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNM</td>
<td>Centre for Co-operation with Non-Members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNR</td>
<td>Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCPCJ</td>
<td>Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice</td>
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</table>
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CCWC</td>
<td>Certain Conventional Weapons Convention, <strong>Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to have Indiscriminate Effects (and Protocols)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>Conference on Disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>CARICOM Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDM</td>
<td>Clean Development Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDP</td>
<td>Congrès pour la Démocratie et le Progrès, Congress for Democracy and Progress [Burkina Faso]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEATS</td>
<td>Central European Air Traffic Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDRO</td>
<td>Centro de Información y Educación para la Prevención del Abuso de Drogas, Center for Information and Education for the Prevention of Drug Abuse [Peru]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEECs</td>
<td>Central and Eastern European Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEEPUS</td>
<td>Central European Exchange Programme of University Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEFTA</td>
<td>Central European Free Trade Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEI</td>
<td>Central European Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEMR</td>
<td>Council of European Municipalities and Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENCOOP</td>
<td>Central European Nations’ Cooperation in Peace Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEN-SAD</td>
<td>Community of Sahel-Saharan States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERN</td>
<td><strong>Organisation Européenne pour la Recherche Nucléaire</strong>, European Organization for Nuclear Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEU</td>
<td>Commission for Europe [UNWTO]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CF</td>
<td>Cultural Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFC</td>
<td>Common Fund for Commodities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFE</td>
<td>Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFS</td>
<td>Committee on World Food Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFSP</td>
<td>Common Foreign and Security Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Consulate General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGIAR</td>
<td>Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
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XVIII
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CICP</td>
<td>Centre for International Crime Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIGEPS</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport [UNESCO]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIME</td>
<td>Committee on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIMIC</td>
<td>Civil-Military Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP</td>
<td>Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITES</td>
<td>Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>Consulting and Research Center for Law and Institutions in Transition Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLRTAP</td>
<td>Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMCO</td>
<td>Civil-Military Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMIT</td>
<td>Committee on Capital Movements and Invisible Transactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CND</td>
<td>Commission on Narcotic Drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNDP</td>
<td>Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple National Congress for the Defence of the People [Democratic Republic of the Congo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COAG</td>
<td>Committee on Agriculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COHOM</td>
<td>Groupe de travail droits de l’homme EU Council Working Party on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMKFOR</td>
<td>Commander Kosovo Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of the Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPUOS</td>
<td>Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COREPER</td>
<td>Comité des représentants permanents Permanent Representatives Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COSAC</td>
<td>Conférence des organes spécialisés dans les affaires communautaires et européennes des parlements de l’Union européenne Conference of Community and European Affairs Committees of Parliaments of the European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COST</td>
<td>European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPC</td>
<td>Communist Party of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPHRFF</td>
<td>Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
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## List of Acronyms

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<thead>
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<th>Acronym</th>
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<td>Consumer Price Index</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPPNM</td>
<td>Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPT</td>
<td>European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment</td>
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<tr>
<td>CROMAC</td>
<td>Croatian Mine Action Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRT</td>
<td>Civilian Response Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCE</td>
<td>Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSD</td>
<td>Commission on Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSDP</td>
<td>Common Security and Defence Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSEF</td>
<td>Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSME</td>
<td>CARICOM Single Market and Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSN</td>
<td>Comunidad Sudamericana de Naciones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSN</td>
<td>South American Community of Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSocD</td>
<td>Commission on Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTO</td>
<td>Collective Security Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSW</td>
<td>Commission on the Status of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTBT</td>
<td>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTBT PrepCom</td>
<td>Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTBTO</td>
<td>Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTC</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTITF</td>
<td>Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>CUF</td>
<td>Civic United Front [Tanzania]</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
<td>Chemical Weapons Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>CWC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Diplomatische Akademie</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>Development Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCD</td>
<td>Development Co-operation Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDA</td>
<td>Doha Development Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilization &amp; Reintegration</td>
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## List of Acronyms

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<td>Dept.</td>
<td>Department</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFI</td>
<td>Development Fund for Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFS</td>
<td>Department of Field Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPA</td>
<td>Darfur Peace Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>Department of Peacekeeping Operations</td>
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<tr>
<td>DPT</td>
<td>Druk Phuensum Tshogpa Party of Blissful Harmony [Bhutan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DR-CAFTA</td>
<td>U.S.-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>DS</td>
<td>Democratic Party of Serbia</td>
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<tr>
<td>DUI</td>
<td>Democratic Union for Integration [Macedonia]</td>
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<td>East African Community</td>
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<td>EC-ASEAN Co-operation Agreement</td>
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<td>EAGGF</td>
<td>European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund</td>
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<td>EAP</td>
<td>Environment Action Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAPC</td>
<td>Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>EAS</td>
<td>East Asia Summit</td>
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<tr>
<td>EASA</td>
<td>European Aviation Safety Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBA</td>
<td>Everything but Arms</td>
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<tr>
<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECA</td>
<td>European Commission on Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECAP</td>
<td>European Capability Action Plan</td>
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<td>ECCAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of Central African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECDC</td>
<td>European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHO</td>
<td>European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECFI</td>
<td>European Court of First Instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Court of Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHRFF</td>
<td>European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECJ</td>
<td>European Court of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECLAC</td>
<td>Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECMWF</td>
<td>European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts</td>
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<td>ECOFIN</td>
<td>Economic and Financial Affairs Council</td>
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## List of Acronyms

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>Economic and Social Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community Of West African States</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECPHR</td>
<td>European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECRI</td>
<td>European Commission against Racism and Intolerance</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECSEE</td>
<td>Energy Community of South East Europe</td>
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<td>EDA</td>
<td>European Defence Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDF</td>
<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EDG</td>
<td>European Democrat Group [Council of Europe]</td>
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<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Area</td>
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<td>EEBC</td>
<td>Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission</td>
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<td>EEC</td>
<td>European Economic Community</td>
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<td>European Development Fund</td>
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<td>EEP</td>
<td>Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America</td>
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<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Fair Trade Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFTA</td>
<td>European Free Trade Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>e.g.</td>
<td>exempli gratia</td>
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<tr>
<td>EGF</td>
<td>European Globalisation Adjustment Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIB</td>
<td>European Investment Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<td>EIT</td>
<td>European Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELAK</td>
<td>Elektronischer Akt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electronic File (records management system)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELBA</td>
<td>Elektronische Basisinformation Außenpolitik</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(electronic foreign affairs data base)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELISA</td>
<td>Elektronisches Informationsmanagementsystem des Außenministeriums (the Foreign Ministry’s Electronic Information Management System)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELN</td>
<td>Ejército de Liberación Nacional</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National Liberation Army [Colombia]</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMBC</td>
<td>European Molecular Biology Conference</td>
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<td>EMRP</td>
<td>European Metrology Research Programme</td>
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<td>EMS</td>
<td>European Monetary System</td>
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<td>EnC</td>
<td>European Energy Community</td>
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<td>ENP</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood Policy</td>
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</table>
**List of Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument</td>
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<td>ENVISAT</td>
<td>Environment Satellite</td>
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<tr>
<td>EOEP</td>
<td>Earth Observation Envelope System</td>
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<tr>
<td>EP</td>
<td>European Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPA</td>
<td>Economic Partnership Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPCIP</td>
<td>European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPE</td>
<td>Energy Policy for Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPO</td>
<td>European Patent Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPP/CD</td>
<td>Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats [Council of Europe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPU</td>
<td>European Peace University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERGEG</td>
<td>European Regulators Group for Electricity and Gas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERP</td>
<td>European Recovery Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERPA</td>
<td>Emission Reductions Purchase Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESA</td>
<td>European Space Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESDP</td>
<td>European Security and Defence Policy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESDN</td>
<td>European Sustainable Development Network</td>
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<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESNA</td>
<td>European System of National Accounts</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESPI</td>
<td>European Space Policy Institute</td>
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<td>ETC</td>
<td>European Training Centre for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU BAM</td>
<td>European Union Border Assistance Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EU EOM</td>
<td>European Union Election Observation Mission</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUFOR</td>
<td>European Union Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUFOR</td>
<td>Multinational stabilization force</td>
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<td>EUFOR</td>
<td>European Union military bridging operation in eastern Tchad/RCA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMC</td>
<td>European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMCDDDA</td>
<td>European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EUMETSAT</td>
<td>European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUMM</td>
<td>European Union Monitoring Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUNIC</td>
<td>European Union National Institutes for Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPAT</td>
<td>EU Police Advisory Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPM</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPOL</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPOL COPPS</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPOL RD Congo</td>
<td>European Union police mission undertaken in the RD Congo framework of reform of the security sector and its interface with the system of justice in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPT/s</td>
<td>EU Planning Team/s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPU</td>
<td>Eurasia-Pacific Uninet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURAC</td>
<td>European Academy Bolzano [Italy]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURASEC</td>
<td>Eurasian Economic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EURATOM</td>
<td>European Atomic Energy Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUREKA</td>
<td>European Research Coordination Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROCONTROL</td>
<td>European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROPOL</td>
<td>European Police Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUSE</td>
<td>EU Special Envoy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUSEC RD CONGO</td>
<td>Mission de conseil et d’assistance de l’Union européenne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>en matière de réforme du secteur de la sécurité en République démocratique du Congo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European Union mission to provide advice and assistance for security sector reform in the Democratic Republic of the Congo</td>
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<tr>
<td>EUSR</td>
<td>EU Special Representative</td>
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<td>EUTELSAT</td>
<td>European Telecommunications Satellite Organization</td>
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<td>EUWI</td>
<td>European Union Water Initiative</td>
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<td>ex-FAR</td>
<td>ex-Forces armées rwandaises</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>former Armed Forces of Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAO</td>
<td>Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARC</td>
<td>Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Acronyms

FATF Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering
FBI Federal Bureau of Investigation
FDLR Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda
Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FLG Federal Law Gazette
FMCT Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty
Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices
FMEIA Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs
FNL Forces Nationales de Libération
National Liberation Forces [Burundi]
FPHC Frontier Primary Health Care
FRA European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
FRELIMO Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique
Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
FRONTEX Agence européenne pour la gestion de la coopération opérationnelle aux frontières extérieures des États membres de l'Union européenne
European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union
FRPI Force de résistance patriotique en Ituri
Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri
FSF Financial Stability Forum
FTAA Free Trade Area of the Americas
GAM Gerakan Aceh Merdeka
Free Aceh Movement
GDP Gross Domestic Product
GCC Gulf Cooperation Council
GDPRD Global Donor Platform for Rural Development
GEF Global Environmental Facility
GENDERNET Network on Gender Equality
G.m.b.H Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung
Limited liability company
GFATM Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GFSE Global Forum for Sustainable Energy
GMEF Global Ministerial Environment Forum
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GMES</td>
<td>Global Monitoring for Environment and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMOs</td>
<td>Genetically modified organisms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNI</td>
<td>Gross National Income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPS</td>
<td>Global Positioning System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRECO</td>
<td>Group of States against Corruption</td>
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<td>G4</td>
<td>Group of 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>G8</td>
<td>Group of 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-20</td>
<td>Group of Twenty [Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors]</td>
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<td>G77</td>
<td>Group of 77</td>
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<tr>
<td>GRULAC</td>
<td>Grupo Latinoamericano y del Caribe Group of Latin American and Caribbean States</td>
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<td>GSTP</td>
<td>Global System of Trade Preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCOC</td>
<td>The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HDZ</td>
<td>Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Croatian Democratic Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCFCs</td>
<td>Hydrochlorofluorocarbons</td>
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<tr>
<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Heavily Indebted Poor Countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLS</td>
<td>High-Level Segment</td>
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<td>HRC</td>
<td>Human Rights Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSN</td>
<td>Human Security Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>HTP</td>
<td>Harmful Traditional Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAAC</td>
<td>Independent Audit Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
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<td>IAEA</td>
<td>International Atomic Energy Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAF</td>
<td>International Arrangement on Forests</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAMB</td>
<td>International Advisory and Monitoring Board [of the Development Fund for Iraq]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBE</td>
<td>International Bureau of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICAO</td>
<td>International Civil Aviation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCM</td>
<td>International Conference on Chemicals Management</td>
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<tr>
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### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICCPR</td>
<td>International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICEM</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IC/GLR</td>
<td>International Conference on the Great Lakes Region</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICI</td>
<td>International Compact with Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICIMOD</td>
<td>International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICJ</td>
<td>International Court of Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICMPD</td>
<td>International Centre for Migration Policy Development</td>
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<td>ICO</td>
<td>International Civilian Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICPD</td>
<td>International Conference on Population and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICPDR</td>
<td>International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICPR</td>
<td>International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICRW</td>
<td>International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICTR</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICTY</td>
<td>International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Industrial Development Board [UNIDO]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB</td>
<td>Inter-American Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDM</td>
<td>Institut für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.e.</td>
<td>id est that is</td>
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<tr>
<td>IEA</td>
<td>International Energy Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFAD</td>
<td>International Fund for Agricultural Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFAP</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
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<td>IFRC</td>
<td>International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGAD</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Authority on Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGASOM</td>
<td>Peacekeeping Mission of IGAD in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>IGF</td>
<td>Internet Governance Forum</td>
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<td>International Health Regulations</td>
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<td>IIASA</td>
<td>International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis</td>
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<td>IIC</td>
<td>Independent Inquiry Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIC</td>
<td>Institute for International Cooperation</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIEP</td>
<td>International Institute for Educational Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>IIP</td>
<td>International Institute for Peace</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILC</td>
<td>International Labour Conference [ILO]</td>
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<td>ILC</td>
<td>International Law Commission</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMEC</td>
<td>Industrialized Market Economy Countries</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>IMO</td>
<td>International Maritime Organization</td>
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<td>IMS</td>
<td>International Monitoring System</td>
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<tr>
<td>INSARAG</td>
<td>International Search and Rescue Advisory Group</td>
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<td>INSTRAW</td>
<td>International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>INTOSAI</td>
<td>International Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions</td>
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<td>International Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IPCC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Pre-accession</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPI</td>
<td>International Press Institute</td>
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<td>IPPC</td>
<td>International Plant Protection Convention</td>
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<td>IPTF</td>
<td>United Nations International Police Task Force</td>
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<td>IPU</td>
<td>Integrated Police Unit</td>
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<td>IRENA</td>
<td>International Renewable Energy Agency</td>
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<td>ISA</td>
<td>International Seabed Authority</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force</td>
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<td>ISCED</td>
<td>International Standard Classification of Education</td>
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<td>ISEA</td>
<td>International Symposium on Electronic Art</td>
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<td>ISG</td>
<td>International Steering Group</td>
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<td>ISPA</td>
<td>Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITER</td>
<td>International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITF</td>
<td>Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research</td>
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<td>ITLOS</td>
<td>International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea</td>
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<tr>
<td>ITPGRFA</td>
<td>International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture</td>
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<td>ITSO</td>
<td>International Telecommunications Satellite Organization</td>
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<td>ITU</td>
<td>International Telecommunication Union</td>
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## List of Acronyms

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<td>ITU-T</td>
<td>International Telecommunication Union – Telecommunications Standardization Sector</td>
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<td>IUCN</td>
<td>International Union for Conservation of Nature</td>
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<tr>
<td>IWC</td>
<td>International Whaling Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCMB</td>
<td>Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>JEM</td>
<td>Justice and Equality Movement [Sudan]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIPTC</td>
<td>Jordanian International Police Training Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIU</td>
<td>Joint Inspection Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>JPO</td>
<td>Junior Professional Officer</td>
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<td>JREC</td>
<td>Johannesburg Renewable Energy Coalition</td>
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<td>JVI</td>
<td>Joint Vienna Institute</td>
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<td>JVMM</td>
<td>Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>KANU</td>
<td>Kenya African National Union</td>
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<td>KFOR</td>
<td>Kosovo Force</td>
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<td>LAC</td>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
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<td>LDCs</td>
<td>Least Developed Countries</td>
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<td>LDC III</td>
<td>Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries</td>
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<td>LDK</td>
<td>Democratic League of Kosovo</td>
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<td>LFS</td>
<td>Labour Force Survey</td>
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<td>LIPRODHOR</td>
<td>Ligue Rwandaise pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’Homme</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord's Resistance Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRTAP</td>
<td>Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution</td>
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<td>LSI</td>
<td>Socialist Movement for Integration [Albania]</td>
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<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [Sri Lanka]</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAB</td>
<td>Man and the Biosphere</td>
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<td>M.A.I.S.</td>
<td>Master of Advanced International Studies</td>
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<td>MALCA</td>
<td>Modern Austrian Literature and Culture Association</td>
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<td>MANPADS</td>
<td>Man-Portable Air Defense Systems</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAS</td>
<td>Movimiento Al Socialismo</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Movement toward Socialism [Bolivia]</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>---------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MCDA</td>
<td>Military and Civil Defence Assets</td>
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<td>MCDU</td>
<td>Military and Civil Defense Unit</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
<td>Movement for Democratic Change [Zimbabwe]</td>
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<td>MDG/s</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal/s</td>
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<td>MEDA</td>
<td>Méasures d’accompagnement financières et techniques (Financial and technical measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership)</td>
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<td>MEP</td>
<td>Member of the European Parliament</td>
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<td>MERCOSUR</td>
<td>Mercado Común del Sur (Common Market of the South)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIGA</td>
<td>Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>MILF</td>
<td>Moro Islamic Liberation Front [Philippines]</td>
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<td>MINUGUA</td>
<td>Mission de vérification des Nations Unies au Guatemala (United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSME</td>
<td>Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
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<td>MNF</td>
<td>Multinational Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNTF S</td>
<td>Multi-National Task Force South</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOP</td>
<td>Meeting of the Parties</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOTAPM</td>
<td>Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTCR</td>
<td>Missile Technology Control Regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>MTF</td>
<td>Maritime Task Force</td>
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## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>New Agenda Coalition</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<td>NAIADES</td>
<td>Navigation And Inland Waterway Action and Development in Europe</td>
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<td>NAM</td>
<td>Non-Aligned Movement Movement of Non-Aligned Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>NAMA</td>
<td>Non-Agricultural Market Access</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAPincl</td>
<td>National Action Plans on Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>NARC</td>
<td>National Rainbow Coalition [Kenya]</td>
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<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>NCEP</td>
<td>National Civil Education Programme</td>
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<td>NEEDS</td>
<td>Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support</td>
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<td>NEPAD</td>
<td>New Partnership for Africa’s Development</td>
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<td>NGO/s</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization/s</td>
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<tr>
<td>NORAD</td>
<td>North American Aerospace Defense Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPP</td>
<td>Nuclear Power Plant</td>
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<td>NPT</td>
<td>Non-Proliferation Treaty Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons</td>
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<td>NRF</td>
<td>NATO Response Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRP</td>
<td>National Reform Programme</td>
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<td>NSG</td>
<td>Nuclear Suppliers Group</td>
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<td>NTA</td>
<td>New Transatlantic Agenda</td>
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<td>NU-NS</td>
<td>Blōk Nascha Ukrajina – Narodna samooborona Our Ukraine – People’s Self Defence Bloc</td>
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<td>ÖAD</td>
<td>Österreichischer Austauschdienst Austrian Exchange Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAS</td>
<td>Organization of American States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organization of African Unity</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCHA</td>
<td>Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODCCP</td>
<td>Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>ODIHR</td>
<td>Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODM</td>
<td>Orange Democratic Movement [Kenya]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
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</table>
### List of Acronyms

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OEZA</td>
<td>Österreichische Entwicklungs- und Ostzusammenarbeit Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe</td>
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<td>OFID</td>
<td>OPEC Fund for International Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Organisation of the Islamic Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>OJEC</td>
<td>Official Journal of the European Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>OJEU</td>
<td>Official Journal of the European Union</td>
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<td>[before 1 February 2003: Official Journal of the European Communities, OJEC]</td>
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<tr>
<td>OMA</td>
<td>Office of Military Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONUB</td>
<td>Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi United Nations Operation in Burundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OOSA</td>
<td>Office for Outer Space Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPCW</td>
<td>Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPS</td>
<td>Overarching Policy Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>OPEC</td>
<td>Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>OSCE</td>
<td>Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe</td>
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<td>OSCE/ODIHR</td>
<td>OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights</td>
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<td>ÖSD</td>
<td>Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Austrian German Language Diploma</td>
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<tr>
<td>ÖSFK</td>
<td>Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>OSI</td>
<td>Ost- und Südosteuropäischeinstitut Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAICV</td>
<td>Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIGC</td>
<td>Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAITHOM</td>
<td>Pakistan Austrian Institute for Tourism and Hotel Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAMECA</td>
<td>Police Assistance Mission of the European Community to Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaN</td>
<td>Partner of all Nations</td>
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<td>XXXII</td>
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</table>
**List of Acronyms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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</table>
| PAN     | Partido Acción Nacional  
National Action Party [Mexico] |
| PAP     | Pan-African Parliament |
| para    | Paragraph |
| PAROS   | Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space |
| PASPA   | Partenariat Stratégique pour la Paix en Afrique  
Strategic Partnership for Peace in Africa |
| PBC     | Peacebuilding Commission |
| PBC     | Programme and Budget Committee [UNIDO] |
| PCA     | Partnership and Cooperation Agreement |
| PCT     | Parti Congolais du Travail  
Congolese Workers Party [Republic of Congo] |
| PDK     | Democratic Party of Kosovo |
| PES     | Party of European Socialists |
| PfP     | Partnership for Peace |
| PHARE   | Action plan for coordinated aid to Poland and Hungary |
| PIAAC   | Programme for the International Assessment for Adult Competencies |
| PIC     | Peace Implementation Council |
| PIC     | Prior Informed Consent |
| PIF     | Pacific Islands Forum |
| PISA    | Programme for International Student Assessment |
| PLO     | Palestine Liberation Organization |
| PML-N   | Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz |
| PNR     | Passenger Name Records |
| PNU     | Party of National Unity [Kenya] |
| PODEMOS | Poder Democrático y Social  
Democratic and Social Power [Bolivia] |
| POPs    | Persistent Organic Pollutants |
| POVNET  | Network on Poverty Reduction |
| PPP     | Pakistan Peoples Party |
| PPP     | People Power Party [Thailand] |
| PPP     | Purchasing Power Parity |
| PR      | Party of Regions [Ukraine] |
| PRD     | Partido de la Revolución Democrática  
Democratic Revolutionary Party [Mexico] |
| PRSP    | Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers |
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRT</td>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>Political and Security Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS</td>
<td>Power of Serbia Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSSH</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Albania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS</td>
<td>Provisional Technical Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RACVIAC</td>
<td>South-East European Regional Arms Control Verification And Implementation Assistance Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCC</td>
<td>Regional Co-operation Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCF</td>
<td>Regulatory Cooperation Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCD</td>
<td>Rassemblement Constitutionnel Démocratique Constitutional Democratic Rally [Tunisia]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REACH</td>
<td>Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restrictions of Chemical Substances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REEEP</td>
<td>Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RIS</td>
<td>River Information Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPF</td>
<td>Rwanda Patriotic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAA</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAARC</td>
<td>South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACU</td>
<td>Southern African Customs Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAICM</td>
<td>Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>SALW</td>
<td>Small Arms and Light Weapons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>Stabilisation and Association Process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAPARD</td>
<td>Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARD</td>
<td>Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARS</td>
<td>Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCO</td>
<td>Shanghai Cooperation Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCSL</td>
<td>Special Court for Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDP</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party [Serbia]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDPO</td>
<td>Serbian Democratic Renewal Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSM</td>
<td>Social Democratic Union of Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SECO</td>
<td>Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEECP</td>
<td>South-East European Cooperation Process</td>
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</table>
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEEMO</td>
<td>South East Europe Media Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SESAR</td>
<td>Système européen de nouvelle génération pour la gestion du trafic aérien (New generation European air traffic management system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFOR</td>
<td>Stabilization Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGCI</td>
<td>Secrétariat général du Comité interministériel pour les questions de coopération économique européenne (Secretariat General of the inter-ministerial committee for questions on European economic co-operation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAPE</td>
<td>Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHIRBRIG</td>
<td>Standby Forces High Readiness Brigade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SICA</td>
<td>Sistema de la Integración Centroamericana (Central American Integration System)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPA</td>
<td>State Intelligence Protection Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIS</td>
<td>Schengen Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SITCEN</td>
<td>EU Situation Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLM/A</td>
<td>Sudan Liberation Movement/Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMEs</td>
<td>Small and medium-sized enterprises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOC</td>
<td>Groupe Socialiste (Socialist Group [Council of Europe])</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFA</td>
<td>Status of Forces Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Socialist Party [Albania]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPE</td>
<td>Socialist Group in the European Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIDER</td>
<td>United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPIS</td>
<td>Special Programme in International Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPLM/A</td>
<td>Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPO</td>
<td>Serbian Renewal Movement</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPP</td>
<td>Serbian Progressive Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPS</td>
<td>Socialist Party of Serbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRS</td>
<td>Serbian Radical Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRSG</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSOD</td>
<td>Special session on disarmament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSR</td>
<td>Security Sector Reform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST-EP</td>
<td>Sustainable Tourism – Eliminating Poverty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SVP</td>
<td>Südtiroler Volkspartei (South Tyrolean People’s Party)</td>
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List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWAC</td>
<td>Sahel and West Africa Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAPO</td>
<td>South West Africa People’s Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAPs</td>
<td>Sector-wide approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWISSCOY</td>
<td>Swiss Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABD</td>
<td>Transatlantic Business Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACD</td>
<td>Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Treaty of Amity and Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACIS</td>
<td>Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCPR</td>
<td>Triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEC</td>
<td>Treaty establishing the European Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMPUS</td>
<td>EU-wide programme that focuses on the development of the higher education systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEN</td>
<td>Trans-European Networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEP</td>
<td>Transatlantic Economic Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEU</td>
<td>Treaty on European Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIEA</td>
<td>Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIM</td>
<td>Temporary International Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIM</td>
<td>Tiako i Madagasikara, I Love Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLD</td>
<td>Transatlantic Legislators Dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOURCOM</td>
<td>First World Conference on Tourism Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TPB</td>
<td>Terrorism Prevention Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRACECA</td>
<td>Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRIPs</td>
<td>Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCK</td>
<td>Kosovo Liberation Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEFA</td>
<td>Union of European Football Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEL</td>
<td>Group of the Unified European Left [Council of Europe]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UIC</td>
<td>Union of Islamic Courts [Somalia]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMNO</td>
<td>United Malays National Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAIDS</td>
<td>Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMA</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMI</td>
<td>United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq</td>
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<tr>
<td>XXXVI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNAMID</td>
<td>African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMSIL</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNC</td>
<td>United Nations Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCCD</td>
<td>United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCDF</td>
<td>United Nations Capital Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCHS</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on Human Settlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCITRAL</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on International Trade Law</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN-CMCoord</td>
<td>United Nations Civil Military Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDAC</td>
<td>United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDC</td>
<td>United Nations Disarmament Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDCP</td>
<td>United Nations International Drug Control Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDOF</td>
<td>United Nations Disengagement Observer Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNECE</td>
<td>United Nations Economic Commission for Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEO</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNEP</td>
<td>United Nations Environment Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFCCC</td>
<td>United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFF</td>
<td>United Nations Forum on Forests</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFICYP</td>
<td>United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNGASS</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly Special Session</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN.GIFT</td>
<td>UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN-Habitat</td>
<td>United Nations Human Settlements Programme</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIDIR</td>
<td>United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDO</td>
<td>United Nations Industrial Development Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
List of Acronyms

UNIFIL United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNIKOM United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission
UNIOSIL United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNISPACE United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
UNMAS United Nations Mine Action Service
UNMEE United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIBH United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIK United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
UNMIL United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMIN United Nations Mission in Nepal
UNMIS United Nations Mission in the Sudan
UNMISET United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor
UNMIT United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste
UNMOVIC United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission
UNOCI United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire
UNODA United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs
UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOGGIS United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau
UNOMIG United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia
UNOMISIL United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
UNOSEK United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo
UNOTIL United Nations Office in Timor-Leste
UNOV United Nations Office at Vienna
UNOWA United Nations Office for West Africa
UNRWA United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSC United Nations Security Council
UNSG United Nations Secretary-General
UN-SPIDER United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response
UNTAET United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
XXXVIII
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UNTOC</td>
<td>United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNTOP</td>
<td>United Nations Tajikistan Office for Peacebuilding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNTSO</td>
<td>United Nations Truce Supervision Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNU</td>
<td>United Nations University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNV</td>
<td>United Nations Volunteers Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>World Tourism Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>Union des Patriotes Congolais Union of Congolese Patriots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPU</td>
<td>Universal Postal Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USOAP</td>
<td>Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFTC</td>
<td>Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights</td>
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<td>VIC</td>
<td>Vienna International Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>VIDC</td>
<td>Vienna Institute for Development and Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>VMG</td>
<td>Vienna Migration Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VMRO-DPMNE</td>
<td>Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VoIP</td>
<td>Voice over Internet Protocol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSAT</td>
<td>Very Small Aperture Terminal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VWP</td>
<td>Visa Waiver Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>Wassenaar Arrangement</td>
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<tr>
<td>WAN</td>
<td>Wide Area Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEAG</td>
<td>Western European Armaments Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEOG</td>
<td>Western Europe and Others Group</td>
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<td>WEU</td>
<td>Western European Union</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIFI</td>
<td>Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Institute for Economic Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIPO</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WMD</td>
<td>Weapons of Mass Destruction</td>
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<tr>
<td>WMO</td>
<td>World Meteorological Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRC</td>
<td>World Radiocommunication Conference</td>
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### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WSIS</td>
<td>World Summit on the Information Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSSD</td>
<td>World Summit on Sustainable Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZC</td>
<td>Zangger Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| ZERP    | Zaštićeni ekološki ribolovni pojas  
Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone |
A. Austria in the European Union

I. The Financial Crisis and the Response by the European Union

The most severe crisis to hit the international financial markets since 1929 has not left the Member States of the European Union (EU) unscathed either, hitting banks, investors and citizens in Austria as well. The rapid and coordinated action taken by the Union at both the European and the international levels as well as the sound Euro prevented a further escalation of the crisis and the collapse of the banking system. The measures adopted by the EU focus on re-establishing confidence, stability and sustainability on the financial markets, thus minimising the negative consequences of the economic crisis for its citizens.

It is still impossible to fully assess the impact of the financial crisis on the real economy. What is certain, however, is that it entails major risks to overall cyclical development. Ongoing forecasts are qualified by a substantial level of uncertainty with respect to who will eventually bear the major burden of the loan losses and the magnitude of those losses. In order to mitigate the impact on the real economy, the European Council of 11 and 12 December adopted a European Economic Recovery Plan for the years 2009 and 2010. The total package amounts to around 200 billion euros, representing about 1.5 per cent of the Union’s gross domestic product (GDP). The programme sets out a joint framework for the efforts undertaken by the Member States in order to guarantee coherent action and the greatest possible effect.

1. The Origins of the Crisis

The US real estate crisis, originally domestic, of summer 2007 soon spilled over to Europe. Numerous European banks suffered losses in the US mortgage market and had to perform substantial write-offs. An economic stimulus programme amounting to 150 billion US dollars was adopted by the US Congress in February 2008, but did not suffice to overcome the crisis in the financial markets.

The negative repercussions on the international markets were further aggravated by subsequent developments in the US, where the financial system was shaken by massive turbulence in late summer. Against the background of the collapse of large US banks and the enormous problems faced by mortgage finance corporations, investment banks and insurance companies, the US Congress adopted a 700-billion-dollar bailout package.
2. The European Union’s Rapid and Coordinated Crisis Management

The EU reacted at an early stage and in a coordinated manner to the global financial crisis. As early as October 2007, the Economic and Financial Affairs Council adopted a detailed Action Plan involving measures directed primarily at improving cross-border cooperation between supervisory authorities, enhancing market transparency, and improving the valuation standards for financial products.

Immediately after the renewed aggravation of the international crisis in September 2008, the EU Member States’ ministers of finance and economy agreed on an immediate response to the financial turmoil. This aimed at strengthening confidence in the markets and restoring their stability, by, for instance, raising the protection guarantee for individual bank deposits, calling on financial institutions to achieve full transparency, and clearly defining common principles and measures in order to manage the crisis. Following the implementation of these initial measures, it was intended to fundamentally reform the global financial system, putting it on a sound footing with clear rules.

On 12 October, the Heads of State and Government of the Euro Area met in Paris for the first time since the foundation of the Economic and Monetary Union and agreed on a common, concerted strategic approach laid down in an Action Plan of the Euro Area Countries. This Action Plan was endorsed by all EU Member States at the European Council meeting of 15 and 16 October. Against the backdrop of the financial crisis the European Council reaffirmed its determination to take coordinated and comprehensive action to restore the smooth running of the financial system, thus ensuring the normal and effective financing of the economy and returning to a path towards growth and employment.

In an informal meeting of the Heads of State and Government in Brussels on 7 November the EU defined its goals for the G-20 summit in Washington, D.C. on 15 November, namely to strengthen the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to introduce uniform accounting standards, stricter controls of the rating agencies, more stringent controls with respect to oversight, surveillance and regulation as well as to reduce risk in the financial sector. Both the final document and the Action Plan adopted at the G-20 Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy reflect these principles, stressing the central role to be played by the IMF in assessing future international crises. The G-20 leaders agreed to meet in London for a follow-up summit in April 2009.

In addition, the EU initiated and/or decided to adopt a number of legislative measures, including, for instance, the Capital Requirements Directive, the “Solvency II” Directive updating the insurance companies’ obligation to establish technical provisions, the Directive on Deposit Guarantee
The Enlargement of the European Union

Schemes, which provides for an increase of the minimum coverage level and the reduction of the payout delay, and the revision of the Directive on Undertakings for Collective Investment in Transferable Securities (UCITS), which will enable millions of consumers to benefit from lower prices for safe investment products.

3. The Coordinated Stimulation of Europe’s Economy

In view of the dramatically deteriorating economic forecasts, the European Council of December agreed on a European Economic Recovery Plan for the years 2009 and 2010. The Plan comprises Community measures totalling 30 billion euros, which are to be coordinated with national measures amounting to 170 billion euros. Measures at Community level include an increase in loans granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) to small and medium-sized enterprises to finance projects in the field of renewable sources of energy, to the automobile industry and for “green” transport. In addition, the Plan provides for a simplification of procedures and an accelerated implementation of programmes to reinforce investments in infrastructure and energy efficiency funded under the Cohesion Fund, the Structural Funds or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Moreover, the limit up to which state aid may be granted to companies without being reported to and reviewed by Brussels (de minimis threshold) will be raised for two years from currently 200,000 euros to 500,000 euros.

II. The Enlargement of the European Union

The Union’s course of action in the enlargement process was based on the renewed consensus on enlargement adopted by the European Council in December 2006 and reconfirmed in 2008. The principles underlying the consensus include the consolidation of commitments, fair and rigorous conditionality and improved communication with the public, whereby particular significance was attached to the Union’s capacity to integrate new members. In its Communication on the Enlargement Strategy published at the beginning of November, the European Commission reaffirmed its support of the European perspective of the Western Balkan countries and offered the prospect of accelerated course towards EU membership, provided that the individual countries meet all the relevant conditions. The most important operational conclusion of the Enlargement Strategy was that technical negotiations with Croatia could be concluded by the end of 2009, if the country fulfils all the necessary conditions. For this purpose, an indicative roadmap based on certain conditions was submitted as a recommendation. In the case of Turkey, the European Commission compared the large number of identified deficits against the country’s strategic significance to the European Union.
1. Croatia and Turkey

After the opening of accession negotiations with Croatia and Turkey on 3 October 2005, the European Commission started to examine whether legislation in the candidate countries complies with the acquis communautaire (screening). The acquis communautaire is divided into 35 chapters, 33 of which are subject to a screening process which serves as the basis for the bilateral negotiations with the individual candidate countries.

Accession negotiations with Croatia have entered a crucial phase. After the European Commission had submitted all screening reports in 2007, the screening procedure was finalised in all 33 chapters in 2008. Negotiations were opened on six chapters: free movement of goods, free movement of workers, public procurement, transport, energy and employment and social affairs. In its Progress Report published in November, the European Commission acknowledged these results, which enable the country to enter the final phase of the negotiations and simultaneously signal to the whole region of the Western Balkans that the prospect of EU membership is real. In addition, the European Commission reaffirmed the necessity of effectively implementing the acquis communautaire and complying with the relevant criteria in the fields of justice and administration, the fight against corruption and organised crime, minority rights, return of refugees, trials of war criminals and the granting of document access to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), and the restructuring of shipyards. Due to Slovenia’s blocking of ten fully negotiated chapters because of unresolved border issues, Croatia was advised to engage in efforts to settle the unresolved bilateral conflicts to facilitate further progress in the negotiation procedure (see Chapter A.IV.3.1.1.).

Due to the country’s slow reform progress, the pace of accession negotiations with Turkey remained slow. After the country was able to avert a serious imminent political crisis resulting from constitutional court action against the governing party, the political reform process had to be revitalised. In its Progress Report published in November, the European Commission underlined Turkey’s need to catch up with the constitutional and judicial reform process. The EU also called for substantial efforts in the fields of women’s rights, equal treatment of men and women, safeguarding freedom of opinion and religion, the fight against corruption, civilian control of armed forces and good neighbourly relations. For Turkey, screening reports were submitted on 32 chapters; on 23 chapters the screening procedure was finalised. Negotiations on four chapters – free movement of capital, company law, intellectual property rights and information society and media – were opened. The continuing scepticism in several EU Member States with regard to Turkey’s full accession led to the exclusion of certain key chapters from the negotiations.

No progress was made in the normalisation of relations between Turkey and the EU Member State of Cyprus. In particular, Turkey failed to meet its obli-
The Enlargement of the European Union

gation under the Ankara Protocol to extend its customs union with the EU, which has existed since 1996, to all Member States which joined the European Union in 2004. The EU Foreign Ministers’ December 2006 decision to fully freeze eight chapters related to this obligation and not to provisionally close any of the other chapters will thus remain effective.

2. Bulgaria and Romania

Since 1 January 2007, Bulgaria and Romania have been Member States of the European Union. In order to address existing residual shortcomings in the particularly sensitive sphere of justice and home affairs, a special cooperation and verification mechanism was introduced to review compliance with specific criteria (benchmarks). In its reports on the progress made in achieving these benchmarks, published at the end of July, the European Commission provides for a continuation of the verification mechanism and calls on both countries to implement certain measures in the spheres of administration and justice, particularly with regard to the fight against corruption and organised crime. The European Commission urged both countries to intensify their reforms and advance their effective implementation. However, the European Commission declared that the application of safeguard measures, such as suspending recognition of Bulgarian and Romanian court judgments, was not currently justified. In the case of Bulgaria, the European Commission in July and December suspended EU funding because of irregularities found by its control and auditing system. However, the European Commission and the Member States still called the reforms and progress already implemented an important step towards the continuation and intensification of the necessary reform efforts.

3. The European Perspective of the Western Balkan Countries

The so-called Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP) developed by the EU for all Western Balkan countries is intended to promote these countries’ rapprochement to the EU through individual reform efforts and to enable them to realise their EU accession perspective in the long term. As a result, the countries have free access to the EU single market for nearly all of their exports and receive financial support for their reform efforts. At the centre of this process are the Stabilisation and Association Agreements (SAA), which provide not only for economic association but also for the implementation of parts of the acquis communautaire through the associated state as well as cooperation with the EU in a number of policy spheres.

The SAAs with Macedonia and Croatia became effective on 1 April 2004 and 1 February 2005 respectively. The agreements signed with Albania on 12 June 2006, with Montenegro on 15 October 2007 and with Bosnia and Herzegovina on 16 June 2008 are currently undergoing ratification. The rati-
fication process for the SAA with Serbia signed on 29 April will be initiated by the EU Member States only after the EU Council, by unanimous decision, has established Serbia’s full cooperation with ICTY. A satisfying performance in the implementation of SAA obligations by the individual countries is regarded as a prerequisite for consideration of the accession application by the EU.

On 5 November, the European Commission published its annual progress reports on Croatia and Macedonia concerning their preparations for EU membership and on Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (in accordance with Resolution 1244 (1999) of the United Nations Security Council), Montenegro and Serbia concerning their ability to meet the criteria established in 1993 by the Copenhagen European Council and the conditions set out in the SAP. These progress reports form the basis for the short- and medium-term reform and development priorities which have to be considered in these countries’ further rapprochement to the Union.

The Western Balkan countries’ accelerated rapprochement to the EU is one of Austria’s foreign policy priorities. Austria therefore welcomes the visa facilitation and readmission agreements concluded with each of these states with effect from 1 January and supports the perspective of visa liberalisation.

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

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) supports the candidate countries of Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey and the potential candidate countries of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo (in accordance with UNSC Resolution 1244), Montenegro and Serbia in their approximation to the EU with funding of 11.5 billion euros for the period 2007-2013.

With its participation in the field of regional cooperation and administrative partnership projects (EU twinning) under the IPA and the expiring projects under the “Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation” (CARDS) and “Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States” (TACIS) programmes, Austria provided concrete support to the pre-accession process. Austria’s participation in EU-funded twinning projects to strengthen public administration in the beneficiary countries focused mainly on the sectors of justice and home affairs, environmental protection and agriculture. The geographical focus of Austrian twinning activities in 2008 was on Bulgaria (eight projects), Romania (four projects) and Croatia and Kosovo (three projects each) with a total of 28 projects assigned to Austria. The project volume amounted to about 29 million euros. So far, only few twinning projects have been circulated by the European Commission in the other countries of the Western Balkans. This situation might change however, since the EU is seeking to accelerate the reform process with the help
The Ratification Process of the Treaty of Lisbon

of a package of measures put together specifically for the region, focusing particularly on increased support in the development of state administration structure.

5. Regional Cooperation in South Eastern Europe

Sustainable cooperation among South Eastern European countries is the prerequisite for the entire region’s successful integration into European structures. A strong vital sign of the growing cooperation in the region was the transfer of responsibility for the promotion of regional cooperation processes from the Brussels-based Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe to the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) founded on 27 February, which is chaired by the Croat Hido Biščević and whose secretariat was established in Sarajevo. The EU and some of its Member States, including Austria, provide financial support for the work of the RCC and have a seat and vote on the organisation’s administrative board (RCC board). The RCC coordinates and promotes regional cooperation initiatives in its key spheres of activity, which include economic and social development, infrastructure and energy, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, education and research and parliamentary cooperation. The RCC also plays an operational role in the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP).

The Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, an EU initiative which has been chaired by the Austrian Erhard Busek since 2002, was established in 1999 as part of a comprehensive, long-term regional conflict prevention strategy of the international community. Its activities ended on 30 June. The Pact contributed to the establishment and revitalisation of regional cooperation structures and to an improvement in good-neighbourly relations. Successfully implemented projects include, for example, the reconstruction of infrastructure, trade liberalisation, an increase in investment and the strengthening of parliamentary cooperation.

III. The Ratification Process of the Treaty of Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon was signed by the EU Member States on 13 December 2007. The Republic of Austria was represented by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik.

1. The Ratification Procedure in Austria

On 11 January, the Council of Ministers initiated the Austrian ratification procedure with a decision to approve the Treaty of Lisbon and submit the Treaty to the National Council. On 16 January, the Treaty was referred to the Constitutional Committee of the National Council for further deliberation.
From 5 February onwards, the Treaty of Lisbon was scrutinised by the **Constitutional Committee**. The committee heard a number of experts who had been invited by the political parties represented in the committee on key aspects of the Treaty.

The first expert round table addressed the changes to the existing EU treaties resulting from the Treaty of Lisbon and discussed whether its ratification required a public referendum. In the course of the discussions, the majority of experts judged the Treaty of Lisbon to be a **step forward** in the EU’s development and emphasised the **improvements** achieved by the Treaty with regard to ensuring democratic control through the European Parliament and national parliaments, promoting the Union’s social dimension, strengthening the Union’s capacity to act, establishing a clear division of competences between the EU and its Member States, and enhancing the protection of fundamental rights for EU citizens. The majority of experts believed that the changes to the EU treaties resulting from the Treaty of Lisbon would **not entail any fundamental changes to the Federal Constitution**, so that a public referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon was not required under Austria’s constitutional law.

Hardly any changes were identified by the experts in the sphere of environmental policy. The objectives laid down by the European Union in the new chapter on energy policy include creating a well-functioning energy market, ensuring security of supply, promoting energy efficiency and renewable sources of energy and strengthening cross-border interconnection of energy networks. The choice of energy sources for energy supply will remain at the discretion of the individual Member States. Similarly, the requirement of unanimity regarding the use of national water resources will also remain unchanged.

Another expert round table discussed the effects of the Treaty on the EU’s social dimension and reached the conclusion that the Treaty of Lisbon constituted a **necessary further development step**. The final responsibility for the level of social standards maintained in their countries will remain with the Member States. The experts positively assessed the role of the social partners envisaged in the Treaty and the formulation of the principle of a competitive social market economy aiming at full employment and social progress, social justice, solidarity between Member States and the fight against social exclusion.

After having dealt with the spheres of energy and the environment as well as social affairs, the Constitutional Committee addressed the topic of external and security policy. The experts did **not detect any militarisation of the EU** through the Treaty of Lisbon and saw Austria’s national sovereignty as being assured. With regard to the issue of **neutrality**, which was also taken account of by the “Irish Clause”, the Treaty does not give rise to any problems.
The fundamental rights contained in the Treaty of Lisbon were the topic of the last expert round table. The experts invited by the parties generally commented positively on the **improvement in fundamental rights protection** under the Lisbon Treaty, which incorporates the legally binding nature of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

The Constitutional Committee continued its deliberations on the Treaty of Lisbon in another session and discussed the issue with Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, who had represented Austria at the Intergovernmental Conference in 2007. Both Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer and Federal Minister Plassnik countered fears that the Treaty would endanger Austria’s neutrality. Federal Minister Plassnik explained that **Austria has left a distinctive mark on the Treaty**, reflected particularly in the strengthening of the EU’s parliamentary component, in the new early warning mechanism for subsidiarity control, the European Citizen Initiative envisaged in the Treaty, the new legal basis for European energy policy and the provisions on climate protection.

On 25 March, the Constitutional Committee of the National Council concluded its deliberations on the Treaty of Lisbon and prepared a comprehensive report requesting that the conclusion of the Treaty be approved by the National Council.

On 9 April, the Treaty of Lisbon was the subject of a seven-hour debate in the plenary of the National Council featuring more than 50 contributions. The ratification of the Treaty was approved by the National Council with a **clear majority of 151 votes in favour over 27 votes against** ratification. Prior to the vote, requests for a referendum had failed to gain the necessary majority.

Subsequently, the decision was passed on to the Federal Council, which referred the matter to its Committee for Constitution and Federalism. On 23 April, the committee dealt with the Treaty of Lisbon and unanimously requested the Federal Council to endorse the decision of the National Council.

On 24 April, following a five-hour debate, the Federal Council approved the decision of the National Council as provided for by the Federal Constitution. In consequence, the ratification instrument was signed by Federal President Heinz Fischer and after having been countersigned by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer was deposited in Rome on 13 May. This marked the **conclusion** of the **Austrian ratification procedure** in accordance with the Austrian Federal Constitution and the provisions of international law.

### 2. The Ratification Procedure in the Other EU Member States

The Treaty of Lisbon may only enter into force after it has been signed by all EU Member States. Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, Romania, France and Bulgaria had already preceded Austria in submitting their ratification instruments to Rome.
Due to its internal legal situation, **Ireland** was the only Member State which on 12 June held a **referendum** on the ratification of the Treaty of Lisbon. A majority of 53.4 per cent of the Irish citizens who participated in the referendum voted against and 46.5 per cent voted in favour of the Treaty of Lisbon, with a turnout of 53 per cent. At its meeting on 19 and 20 June, the European Council took note of this result, whereby the Council agreed that it would take time to analyse the resulting situation. While the ratification procedure in the remaining Member States was to be continued, deliberations on the EU’s further course of action after the Irish referendum were only scheduled for October.

At its meetings in October and December, the European Council dealt with the studies commissioned by the Irish government on the outcome of the referendum. At its December meeting, the Council decided to accommodate the concerns of the Irish citizens by introducing the following provisions. The European Commission will not be reduced in size, as provided for by the Treaty of Nice with effect from 2009 or by the Treaty of Lisbon with effect from the term of office starting in 2014, but will continue to consist of one representative per Member State. The concerns expressed by the Irish citizens in the fields of tax and family policies, neutrality and security policy will be taken account of in the form of guarantees granted to Ireland. In return, the Irish government promised to reopen the ratification process. The European Council furthermore discussed transitional measures to be adopted in the event that the Treaty of Lisbon enters into force after the initially scheduled date at the beginning of 2009.

Despite the negative outcome of the Irish referendum, the **ratification process in the other Member States was continued**. By the end of the year, the Treaty had been approved by the parliaments of all Member States except Ireland and the Czech Republic. In the Czech Republic, the Constitutional Court had been asked by the Senate to review the compatibility of the Treaty of Lisbon with the Czech legal system and on 26 November declared that the provisions of the Treaty were not in conflict with the Czech legal system. In Germany and Poland, the ratification instruments were still awaiting signature by the heads of state and their subsequent deposition in Rome at the end of the year.

**IV. European Information Activities**

Providing Austria’s citizens with comprehensive information on Europe and the EU is one of the major tasks of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. The ministry offered a wide range of documents, media content and activities to provide **factual information on the EU** and contribute to **strengthening European awareness**.

**Key issues** covered by the information activities initially included the Treaty of Lisbon and the presentation of the specific benefits of Austria’s EU mem-
European Information Activities

bership. In autumn, these topics were complemented by efforts to raise awareness regarding the possibility of actively contributing to the European project by participating in the elections to the European Parliament, which will be held in Austria on 7 June 2009.

Ongoing European information activities involved the distribution of information packs (EU brochures, CD ROMs and USB memory sticks containing material on Europe), the participation of experts from the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in events of the “Europaschirm” campaign initiated by the Austrian Economic Chamber, and their participation in further training events. Moreover, the ministry contributed to EU information activities under the administrative partnership between the Republic of Austria and the European Commission by hosting seminars and workshops to raise awareness of EU issues among editors of school newspapers. Several editions of the touring exhibition “EU and YOU”, created jointly with the Austrian Society for European Policy, were on display at Austrian schools. As part of the exhibition, ministry experts participated in a large number of the approximately 50 discussion events on European issues held in 56 schools in all federal provinces, thereby reaching out to about 6,700 pupils and teachers. The opportunity to discuss foreign and European policy topics with ministry staff members was also provided to about 40 school classes and hence to 1,000 pupils who visited the ministry during school excursions. In addition, the ministry answered a large number of citizen enquiries on EU issues and tried to establish contact with authors of letters to the editor who had commented on European issues.

Special mention must be made of the European events and the Open House days held by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. At the Europe Day on 9 May, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik discussed European issues at an event in Innsbruck, while State Secretary Hans Winkler invited school classes to visit the Federal Ministry in order to attend a presentation of projects on the protection of fundamental rights in the EU. The Open House on 12 September was designed to attract a broad public audience, offering interested visitors the opportunity to obtain information about Europe by viewing an exhibition, listening to interactive presentations and engaging in direct discussions with Ministry experts. Moreover, visitors received a brochure entitled “Specific benefits of Austria’s EU membership for Austria’s citizens” as well as an “EU emergency card” for travellers containing important service line numbers in Austria and Europe. On 26 October, Austria’s National Holiday, the Ministry again opened its doors to the public, inter alia providing visitors with comprehensive information on Europe and the EU, this time with a focus on the “Elections to the European Parliament 2009“.

Comprehensive and diverse information on Europe is not only available from the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs at www.bmeia.at, but is also provided on the Internet platforms www.europa-
Austria in the European Union

goodende.at and www.zukunftseuropa.at, which both aim to contribute to an interactive, lively and ongoing discussion about Europe.

V. The Policies of the European Union

1. Austria’s Role in the European Institutions

Since 22 November 2004, Benita Ferrero-Waldner has been the Commission Member responsible for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy. 437 Austrians (204 women and 233 men) are currently holding posts in bodies of the European Commission, which is equivalent to a share of approximately 1.9 per cent of the Commission’s total staff. In comparison, Austria’s population accounts for about 1.7 per cent of the total EU population. Austria also provides a high proportion of the senior officials in the Council.

Peter Jann and Josef Azizi are the Austrian judges at the European Court of Justice and the European Court of First Instance, respectively. Hubert Weber is Dean of the Audit Group “Preservation and Management of Natural Resources” at the European Court of Auditors. From January 2005 to January 2008, he served as President of the European Court of Auditors. Since 2003, Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell has been the Austrian member on the Executive Board of the European Central Bank.

1.1. European Parliament

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

Numerous Austrian MEPs carry out important functions in the European Parliament. Since 2007, Herbert Bösch (SPE) has chaired the Committee on Budgetary Control. Hubert Pirker (EVP) is head of the Delegation for Relations with Korea. Johannes Voggenhuber (Greens) is the deputy chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs, Christa Prets (SPE) is the deputy chairwoman of the Delegation for Relations with Iran and Hannes Swoboda (SPE) is the deputy chairman of the Delegation for Relations with South-Eastern Europe.

Reports form the basis for parliamentary debate and decision-making in the European Parliament. Numerous Austrian MEPs have acted as rapporteurs, such as Hannes Swoboda (SPE) on the 2007 Progress Report on Croatia and Othmar Karas (EVP) on the Green Paper on Retail Financial Services in the Single Market.
In 2008, the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought awarded by the European Parliament was presented to the Chinese human rights activist Hu Jia.

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

The Republic of Austria is represented before the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and the European Court of First Instance (ECFI) by legal counsels from the Constitutional Service of the Federal Chancellery. In 2008, Austrian courts initiated 25 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).

By the end of the year, ten proceedings for alleged infringements of Community law were pending against the Republic of Austria. These infringement proceedings concern the compatibility of bilateral Austrian investment treaties with Community law; the inadequate implementation of the Birds’ Directive; the access to the profession of patent attorney; the nationality requirement for notaries; the inadequate identification of proposed sites of Community importance in accordance with the Directive on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive); minimum selling prices for cigarettes and fine-cut tobacco for the rolling of cigarettes; regulations of the Medical Chamber of Upper Austria imposing an obligation on every medical doctor becoming established in the Federal Province of Upper Austria to open a bank account with Oberösterreichische Landesbank; the failure to draw up external emergency plans in accordance with Directive 2003/105/EC regarding the control of major-accident hazards involving dangerous substances (Seveso II Directive); the failure to implement Directive 2004/35/EC on environmental liability with regard to the prevention and remedying of environmental damage and the inadequate implementation of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications.

In 2008 the European Court of Justice issued a judgement in three proceedings establishing an infringement of Community law by the Republic of Austria. These judgements concerned transparency of measures regulating the prices of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems; difficulties in relation to the registration of older imported used vehicles regarding their compatibility with the free movement of goods; and the Austrian Foreign Nationals Employment Act with regard to its compatibility with the freedom of establishment for citizens of the new EU Member States and the verification of their self-employed status.

1.3. Committee of the Regions

In the Committee of the Regions, Austria is represented with twelve members. The Austrian delegation is headed by the President of the Provincial Parliament of the Federal Province of Tyrol, Herwig van Staa, and is com-
posed of eight of nine Governors of the Federal Provinces and three representatives of the Association of Cities and Towns and the Association of Municipalities. Opinions of the Committee of the Regions were adopted in five plenary sessions. These sessions periodically address issues which are of importance to Austria, such as trans-European networks, services of general economic interest, mountain farming, water policy, growth and employment, climate change, energy supply, enlargement policy, asylum policy, economic and social cohesion, basic institutional issues, administrative simplification and impact assessment. With numerous amendments and its participation in a large number of amendments introduced by other national delegations, the Austrian representatives contributed significantly to formulating the opinions of the Committee of the Regions. In October, the Committee of the Regions held its third Subsidiarity Conference in Paris, following the conferences in Berlin in 2004 and London in 2005.

1.4. European Economic and Social Council

The Council serves as an advisory institution to the European Union, performs a “bridging function” between the EU institutions and so-called organised civil society and promotes the latter’s role by building a “structured dialogue” with relevant stakeholders within and outside the Union. The European Economic and Social Council dealt intensively with the economic and financial crisis.


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

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

Neither the Main Committee of the National Council nor the National Council’s Standing Sub-Committee on Matters Relating to the EU nor the EU Committee of the Federal Council have passed formal opinions as defined under Article 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act. However, committees and sub-committees of the National Council and the Federal Council adopted legally non-binding committee statements. On 14 October, the Main Committee of the National Council adopted a legally non-binding committee statement on combating the international financial crisis; on 20 May, the Main Committee’s Standing Sub-Committee adopted legally non-binding committee statements on the Commission’s 2008 Legislative and Working Programme, the proposal for a framework decision to combat terrorism, the proposal for a Directive simplifying procedures of listing and publishing information in the veterinary and zootechnical fields and the “Solvency II” Directive proposal; the EU Committee of the Federal Council adopted legally non-binding committee statements on the proposal for a framework decision to combat terrorism (10 January), the proposal for a Directive simplifying procedures of listing and publishing information in the veterinary and zootechnical fields (27 March), the “Solvency II” Directive proposal (27 March), the Green Paper “Towards a new culture of urban mobility” (19 May), the Commission Communication “A Single Market for 21st century Europe – Services of general interest including social services of general interest” (18 June), the proposal for a Directive on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare; the Commission Communication “A renewed commitment to social Europe: Reinforcing the Open Method of Coordination for Social Protection and Social Inclusion” and the proposal for a Directive on implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation (all on 5 November).

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.

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

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

The economic upswing of 2007 slowed significantly in 2008. The growth in real gross domestic product declined from nearly 3 per cent in 2007 to approximately 1 per cent in 2008, both in the EU Member States and in the Euro Area. The situation on the labour market also deteriorated. Although the labour market as a whole was comparably stable in 2008, the positive development of the period 2005-2007 was halted by an increase in unemployment rates, which in November 2008 amounted to 7.8 per cent in the Euro Area and to 7.2 per cent in the whole EU. Inflation decreased considerably in the second half of 2008, dropping from 4 per cent in July to 1.6 per cent in December. This development can be mainly attributed to the global economic downturn and the related substantial decline in raw material and oil prices.

The economic downturn and the adopted stimulation measures negatively influenced the progress in the budget consolidation efforts achieved in the past few years: while in 2007 the EU's budget deficit amounted to 0.9 per cent of the GDP, in 2008 it had grown to 2.0 per cent. The deficit of the Euro Area also increased, rising from 0.6 per cent of the GDP in 2007 to 1.7 per cent in 2008.

For the European Recovery Plan for 2009 and 2010 and the reshaping of the global financial architecture, see Chapter A I.

4. Employment and Social Policy

The European Council of 13 and 14 March launched the second three-year cycle of the renewed Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. The existing Integrated Guidelines will retain their validity. In October, Austria adopted its second national reform programme (NRP) for growth and employment 2008-2010. The employment-related measures contained in the NRP focus on promoting the employment of older persons and disadvantaged young people, promoting women and improving skills supply.

In Austria, the implementation of the European employment policy goals is supported through the European Social Fund (ESF). Programmes funded under this scheme include “Active Aging”, the promotion of low-skilled workers and the labour market integration of disabled people.

The Federal Ministry for Social Affairs and Consumer Protection hosted the conference “Taking Part & Being Active – Active inclusion as a part of the European social model” in Vienna on 15 May.

On 2 July, the European Commission presented its Communication on a Renewed Social Agenda. It is based on the pillars of opportunity, access and solidarity and identified seven priority areas: children and youth; investing in people, more and better jobs, new skills; mobility; longer and healthier life;
The Policies of the European Union

combating poverty and social exclusion; fighting discrimination and promoting gender equality; opportunities, access and solidarity on the global scene.

The initiative of the Salzburg Summer Talks on Social Europe was continued with the topic “Solidarity between generations and its effects on the generation of 35 to 65-year-olds”.

In the middle of September, the Federal Ministry for Social Affairs and Consumer Protection submitted the Strategy Report for Social Protection and Social Inclusion for the period 2008-2010, which outlines Austria’s major projects in the spheres of social inclusion, pensions, health and long-term nursing care. Moreover, on 10 October, the Ministry presented a study on “Social services of general interest and the application of Community law”.

On 2 October, the European Council decided to designate 2010 as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.

On 3 October, the European Commission published common principles and guidelines for the active inclusion of people excluded from the labour market.

The issues addressed by the Expert Group on Demographic Issues established at the European Commission and chaired by former Austrian Social Minister Eleonora Hostasch included relations between generations, inter-generational solidarity and long-term nursing care.

5. Structural and Cohesion Policy

Structural and cohesion policy is one of the European Union’s core policies and aims at bridging the development divide between the regions and Member States. Its share in the EU budget for the current budget period amounts to approximately 38 per cent. Against the backdrop of the EU’s enlargement by twelve new Member States and the resultant doubling of the development gap between the individual regions, the EU’s cohesion policy for the years 2007-2013 was thoroughly revised and geared more strongly to the goals of the Lisbon agenda. The Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion published by the European Commission in October initiated the discussion on cohesion policy for the period beyond 2013. The relevant consultations are to be completed under the Czech Presidency in the first half of 2009.

Since its accession to the EU on 1 January 1995, Austria has benefited greatly from EU financial support. From 1995 to the end of the funding period 2007-2013, Austria will have received a total of 5 billion euros from the EU’s structural fund, and this amount will be further increased by funds for rural development totalling more than 3.9 billion euros.
6. Single Market

The EU’s future single market policy will place special emphasis on consumers and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). In February, the Competitiveness Council delivered an opinion on this issue, and in March the European Council defined the required priorities. A special working group was established to prepare a Commission Recommendation on improving single market governance. In December, the European Commission published a first progress report on the single market for 21st century Europe.

Significant progress was made in the implementation of the agenda for better regulation, as documented by the European Commission in its second strategic review in January. Apart from extensive activities aimed at simplification and codification, the European Union continued its efforts to implement the EU Action Programme for reducing administrative burdens in order to achieve the targeted reduction of 25 per cent by 2012.

On 23 June, the EU Agricultural Council adopted the single market package consisting of three documents – the Regulation setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance, the Regulation on mutual recognition and the proposal for a decision on a common framework for the marketing of products. The package is intended to strengthen the single market for goods, simplify the product accreditation process and increase product safety, and hence contributes significantly to the completion of the single market.

On 16 July, the European Commission submitted its Action Plan on sustainable production and consumption and sustainable industrial policy. The Action Plan establishes a framework for smarter consumption and better products, measures for leaner production and measures to create global markets for sustainable products. In the second half of the year, the Competitiveness and Environment Council adopted the relevant Conclusions.

7. Common Agricultural Policy

The launch of the debate on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) beyond 2013, the negotiations on the CAP health check and the food crisis were the central topics addressed under the EU’s agricultural policy.

The discussions on the future of the CAP beyond 2013 were launched at the informal Council of Agricultural Ministers in Annecy (France) from 21 to 23 September with the aim of preparing European agriculture to meet future requirements. The main issues included price stability, production methods, environmental protection and climate change, food security, health, research and innovation and new opportunities and sources of income for farmers. The future of agricultural policy and rural development, which were allocated approximately 43 per cent of the EU budget in 2008, forms part of the comprehensive review of the EU budget.
The Policies of the European Union

The purpose of the **CAP health check** was to promote the simplification, liberalisation and stronger market orientation of the CAP. Major reforms include the reduction in financial support for large farms, the so-called modulation process, in which resources are transferred from the “first pillar” (market regulation instruments, direct payments) to the “second pillar” (rural development), and the phasing-out of the milk quota system. At the Council of Agricultural Ministers of 19 and 20 November, the related negotiations were concluded with a compromise also acceptable to Austria, as it took account of Austria’s central concern, the introduction of a comprehensive package of measures for farmers to cushion the phasing-out of the milk quota system by 2015, and provided for a lower level of modulation and a choice of model with regard to the Single Payment Scheme.

The financial and economic crisis and the **global food crisis** triggered intensive discussions on the future priorities in the field of agriculture and reinforced EU Member States’ call for a restructuring of the EU budget. According to the consultation report presented by the European Commission on 12 November, most of the EU Member States support a reduction of the relatively large share of budget funds (43 per cent) allocated to the sphere of agriculture in favour of new priority areas such as climate change and energy, environmental protection, research and development, infrastructural development and external policies involving foreign and security policy aspects, including closer cooperation with the Union’s neighbouring countries and business partners.

**8. Transport**

On 8 July, the European Commission presented its proposal for the **revision of the Eurovignette Directive**. The intended changes will introduce the hitherto non-existent possibility of adapting toll rates to include so-called external costs. Austria particularly supported the inclusion of all external costs, which comprise not only the costs of noise, air pollution and congestion, but also the costs of road accidents, climate change (CO$_2$ costs), soil and water pollution. The Council of Transport Ministers of 9 December adopted the Council Conclusions on Greening Transport, a strategy for the so-called internalisation of external costs (establishment of a common framework to estimate external transport costs and a strategy for the internalisation of external costs in all modes of transport), and noise protection measures for existing rail vehicles.

Moreover, the European Commission submitted a **Road Transport Package on international road haulage**. The proposals are aimed at codifying existing legislation concerning access to the profession and access to the market in the fields of road passenger transport and road haulage and at simultaneously defining those areas which have been subject to repeated interpretation
difficulties, such as admission to the occupation of road haulage or road passenger transport operator.

The activities to improve the performance and sustainability of the European aviation system were continued. The revision of four regulations on the Single European Sky (SES II Package) is intended to improve the current aviation management system. In addition, the revision of another regulation will grant the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) further competences to maintain and increase the existing European safety standards.

9. Environment

The “climate-energy” legislative package was at the centre of activities in the sphere of environmental policy. It consists of four legal acts, which were adopted by the European Parliament at first reading on 17 December and will contribute to implementing the EU-wide objective of a 20 per cent reduction in CO$_2$ emissions. The amendment to the Directive on emissions trading harmonises emissions trading schemes by allocating emission certificates at European level. Energy-intensive sectors additionally facing fierce international competition will continue to receive free allocations under certain conditions. The Decision on effort sharing regulates the distribution of the effort to reduce emissions among Member States in sectors which are not covered by the emissions trading scheme, such as transport, room heating, agriculture and waste. The Directive on the capture and geological storage of CO$_2$ creates a European legal framework for this technology. The Directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources establishes a binding overall target as well as binding national targets to be achieved by the individual Member States in order to increase the share of renewable energy sources in energy consumption to 20 per cent by 2020.

The climate and energy package is closely linked to the Regulation to reduce CO$_2$ emissions from passenger cars and the amendment to the Fuel Quality Directive, which were also adopted at first reading.

LIFE+ is the EU’s financing instrument for the environment, which is endowed with a total budget of 2.14 billion euros for the period 2007-2013. Across the entire EU, 186 million euros were earmarked for 147 projects, including four projects from Austria.

In implementing the renewed European Strategy for Sustainable Development, the European Commission submitted several legislative proposals to promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production. The European Sustainable Development Network (ESDN), which is chaired by Austria, now covers all EU Member States.
10. Energy

In view of the challenges presented by climate change, energy costs and security of energy supply, the European Union consistently continued its efforts to build an Energy Policy for Europe (EPE), started in 2007.

In connection with the ongoing efforts to implement the third liberalisation package for the single energy market, the European Commission on 23 January presented its proposal for a climate and energy package, whose energy-related measures are particularly aimed at reducing energy consumption, increasing energy efficiency and promoting renewable energy sources. The European Council of 15 and 16 October approved measures to ensure energy security, which include the creation of a single market for electricity and gas, the promotion of renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, the diversification of energy sources and supply routes, the optimisation of energy infrastructures in and around the EU and the further development of energy relations with the supply and transit countries concerned.

On 13 November, the European Commission published its Communication “Second Strategic Energy Review” on security of supply and energy efficiency, which is currently under consideration by the Council and which will provide the foundation for a strategic re-orientation of European energy security policy. Climate change, competitiveness and security of energy supply will thus become central elements of any initiative launched by the Union in the sphere of energy policy.

The EU continued its efforts to integrate its energy-policy interests into existing cooperation instruments with third countries and non-European regions. In all of these processes, Austria pursued its own energy-policy interests, particularly as regards the promotion of renewable energy sources, shaping of the single energy market and diversification of energy sources and routes, with special emphasis being placed on Austria’s support for the realisation of the Nabucco pipeline project. In addition, Austria supported the establishment of an International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and proposed to set up the agency’s headquarters in Vienna.

11. Education and Youth

In the joint progress report of the Council and the European Commission on the implementation of the “Education and Training 2010 Work Programme”, the education ministers highlighted the importance of education as one element of the knowledge triangle formed together with creativity and innovation. An essential stimulus to enhance the level of innovation capacity will be provided by the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009. In November, the Council furthermore adopted the Bordeaux Communiqué on strengthening the relations between vocational training and the labour market as part of the Copenhagen Process.
In view of demographic change, the education ministers underlined the importance of adult qualifications, also reflected in the *Lifelong Learning Programme*, which provided approximately 9,000 students, young people and adults with the opportunity to spend some time studying or working in another EU Member State. The development of further mobility schemes was agreed. In February, the Council adopted the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, which is to serve as an instrument making national qualifications comparable at European level.

With regard to the Recommendation on the establishment of the *European Credit System* for Vocational Education and Training and the Recommendation on the establishment of the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework in Vocational Education and Training, agreement was reached with the European Parliament at first reading. In the sphere of university education, the negotiations on the second programme generation of the *ERASMUS MUNDUS cooperation and mobility programme* for the period 2009-2013 were successfully completed.

The significance of cultural and linguistic diversity for personal and professional development as well as for economic development and social cohesion was addressed at the conference on *multilingualism* in February, the informal conference of education ministers in July, in the Council Conclusions on intercultural competences and the Resolution on a European strategy for multilingualism.

In addition to the consolidation of the EU’s *Youth in Action* programme, the initial five operational actions – youth exchanges and youth initiatives, voluntary service, cooperation with third countries, training of youth workers and dialogue between young people and policy makers – were pursued further. Key activities included the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue and the European Youth Week. Austria submitted 273 projects, 165 of which were funded under the programme.

### 12. Research

In the course of coordinating national funding programmes pursuant to Article 169 TEC, the EU adopted the *Ambient Assisted Living* initiative in June and the *EUROSTARS* initiative to support research-intensive SMEs in July. The initiative for the establishment of the European Metrology Research Programme (EMRP) was submitted by the European Commission in December. On 30 May, the Competitiveness Council approved the *research programme for fuel cells and hydrogen* as the EU’s fifth Joint Technology Initiative.

The final agreement on the establishment of the European Innovation and Technology Institute (EIT) was reached on 21 January. On 18 June, Budapest was chosen to host the Institute’s administrative headquarters.
By issuing Communications on better careers and more mobility, joint programme planning, pan-European research infrastructures, international scientific and technical cooperation and management of intellectual property in publicly funded research organisations, the European Commission provided further details on its Green Paper on the European Research Area published in 2007. The Communication on better careers and more mobility was adopted in spring with the aim of creating a European labour market for researchers.

Moreover, the European Commission on 25 July submitted a proposal for a Council Regulation on a Community legal framework for European research infrastructures based on Art. 171 TEC and on 24 September issued its Communication “European Strategic Framework for international scientific and technical cooperation”. With regard to the protection of intellectual property, the European Commission in April adopted a non-binding recommendation for Member States and their research institutions on the management of intellectual property in knowledge transfer activities, which was welcomed by the Competitiveness Council on 30 May.

The second edition of the European Roadmap for Research Infrastructures drawn up by the European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI), which is composed of representatives of the EU Member States and the European Commission, was presented at the Competitiveness Council in December.

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

Further substantial progress was made in the implementation of the Hague Programme for 2005-2009, which was adopted by the European Council in November 2004.

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

The Schengen expansion constitutes an essential milestone on the road towards a common Europe and a further development of the European peace project. In March, border controls at airports were also eliminated for those Member States which had joined the Schengen Agreement in 2007. In December, Switzerland acceded to the Schengen Area, whereby the elimination of border controls on persons at land frontiers on 12 December will be followed by the elimination of border controls at airports on 29 March 2009. Liechtenstein seeks to become a full member of the Schengen system in September 2009.
The competent Austrian authorities made continued efforts to ensure that the opportunities of the Schengen expansion are fully exploited, while keeping the risks to a minimum. Important measures included the further consolidation of the Central European security partnership through the “Salzburg Forum”, the conclusion of modern police cooperation agreements and the related close collaboration between police forces. A basic prerequisite for the lifting of the controls was the participation of the affected new Member States which joined the EU in 2004 (excepting Cyprus) in the Schengen Information System.

14. Combating Terrorism

Terrorism poses a significant threat to the security of Europe, the values of democratic societies and the rights and freedoms of European citizens. Since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 and the bombings in Madrid (2004) and London (2005), the EU has attached major significance to the fight against terrorism.

In 2005, the EU adopted a Strategy to Combat Terrorism and a Strategy and detailed Action Plan for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism and committed itself to fighting terrorism all over the world while respecting human rights in order to establish an area of freedom, security and justice for its citizens. Major importance was attached to Member States’ cooperation to combat radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism. A handbook compiled by Germany, France and Austria entitled “Violent Radicalisation: Recognition of and Responses to the Phenomenon by Professional Groups Concerned” was a particularly successful project contributing to this purpose. In July, the Council adopted a revised Strategy on Terrorist Financing.

The implementation of the EU’s Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives and the Council Conclusions of December 2007 on addressing chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risks and on bio-preparedness was continued.

The EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Gilles de Kerchove, coordinates activities in the Council and is tasked with ensuring that the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism.

Since terrorism is a global problem and the majority of terrorist threats emerge outside the European Union, the security of the Union directly depends on developments in other countries. The Counter-Terrorism Coordinator particularly highlighted the need for intensified cooperation with Pakistan and the Sahel region. The fight against radicalisation and recruitment will remain at the centre of the EU’s cooperation with the Maghreb countries, and the Union is continuing its support for priority areas of the Western Balkans. Moreover, greater emphasis will be placed on transatlantic cooperation. Through
its **military and civilian crisis management operations** under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) the EU makes an important contribution to improving the security environment, which influences the conditions for violent radicalisation in third countries. **Action plans** on providing technical aid to third countries to support their fight against terrorism promote the development of the required structures and offer training courses to combat money laundering and terrorism.

The EU consistently advocates **multilateral approaches to combating terrorism** and supports the central role played by the United Nations, particularly under the UN Strategy to Combat Terrorism adopted by the United Nations’ General Assembly (UNGA) in 2006 (see Chapter H.III).

As regards the operational fight against terrorism, the European Police Office **EUROPOL**, which is based in The Hague, supports and coordinates the efforts of the individual Member States. Its task is to facilitate the exchange of information between Member States and to analyse information. EUROPOL holds neither power of execution nor power of investigation.

Acting on Austria’s initiative, the EU launched measures to strengthen the collaboration between EUROPOL and **EUROJUST**. EUROJUST supports the Member States in the investigation and prosecution of serious cross-border and organised crime and promotes European cooperation on criminal cases.

Further measures to protect the EU’s citizens include the improvement of border protection and document security, the protection of critical infrastructure, improvements in aviation security and port security, and the control of substances which are used for the production of explosives.

### VI. The European Union’s External Relations

#### 1. The Common Foreign and Security Policy

##### 1.1. General

The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) focused primarily on the continuation of the stabilisation process in the Western Balkans, the situation in Georgia, the quest for a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, and the situations in Afghanistan and Iran. The Union’s crisis management efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe, Somalia and Chad intensified CFSP activities in Africa. In addition, the EU also contributed to the further strengthening of an effective multilateralism through intensified cooperation with the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the UN.

The CFSP addressed the current foreign policy issues at EU level. The EU expressed its position on issues of major significance in its declarations and the conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council and
the European Council. Furthermore, it undertook numerous demarches, particularly in the field of human rights.

In 2008 crisis management activities under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) were expanded. In March, the EU’s EUFOR Tchad/RCA mission reached full operational capability for the first time. An observer mission was sent to the South Caucasus region in response to the crisis in Georgia in August. Since December the first ESDP naval mission has been operating in the seas off the Horn of Africa, and a new mission to support security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau was established.

The Council adjusted its existing sanctions against the Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, Iran, Uzbekistan and the successor states of former Yugoslavia to promote their cooperation with ICTY. The Council decided to expand the group of persons subject to individual measures in Zimbabwe and to suspend the travel ban imposed on certain members of the Belorussian government for a period of six months. In addition, it made changes to the list of persons and groups subject to specific restrictive measures to combat terrorism.

The EU’s Special Representatives (EUSR) remain an important instrument of CFSP. The existing mandates for Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Moldova, Sudan, the African Union (AU), the Middle East Peace Process, the African Great Lakes Region (Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda), South Caucasus and Central Asia were complemented by a mandate for Kosovo and – in the wake of the Russian-Georgian conflict – by a mandate for the crisis in Georgia. Moreover, the EU Special Envoy to Burma/Myanmar took up office at the end of 2007.

In 2008, the CFSP budget amounted to 285 million euros. For 2009, CFSP funds will amount to a total of 242.75 million euros. Most of the budget funds are spent on civil crisis management operations, EUSR activities, promotion of disarmament activities and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

1.2. The European Security and Defence Policy

1.2.1. Ongoing Crisis Management Operations

The EU continued its EUFOR Althea military operation to ensure stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina comprising an average of approximately 2,200 personnel, 110 of which were from Austria. At the end of the year, the EU undertook initial planning efforts regarding a successor mission to advise and assist the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided that such a transformation of EUFOR Althea seems justified by the further political developments in the country. Austria contributed an army company serving in a battalion under German command to support the three battalions of the so-called operational reserve forces, which are available in their countries of
The European Union’s External Relations

origin to quickly reinforce the EUFOR-Althea troops and the KFOR multinational peace operation in Kosovo in the event of a crisis.

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM) launched at the beginning of 2003 also aims at ensuring stability in the country. In line with its new mandate, which was revised at the beginning of 2006, the mission supports the development of a multi-ethnic police force based on the rule of law as well as efforts to combat organised crime. Austria has been participating in this mission with five seconded police officers.

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX KOSOVO), approved by the Council in February, started its operations in December. The mission will support the Kosovo authorities in further developing police, judiciary and customs structures and will assume the functions previously performed in this field by the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The start of the EULEX KOSOVO operations was significantly delayed due to opposition from Serbia and the Serbian population group of Kosovo. EULEX KOSOVO began its operations on 9 December only after an agreement had been concluded with the UN on an extended cooperation and/or distribution of tasks (“six points plan”) and Belgrade had consented to these modifications. Comprising up to 3,000 members, EULEX KOSOVO is by far the largest civilian ESDP mission. Austria has been participating in this mission with up to 35 experts from the spheres of policing and justice.

Measures to implement the ceasefire between Georgia and Russia brokered by the French EU Presidency to settle the conflict around the Georgian province of South Ossetia which had broken out in August also included the establishment of a EU Monitoring Mission to Georgia (EUMM Georgia), which started its operations on 1 October. In addition to monitoring the withdrawal of troops to their original positions held before the outbreak of the conflict, the mission mandate initially granted until mid-September 2009 also includes monitoring the return of people displaced by the conflict to their homes and the observance of human rights by all parties active in the mission’s operations area. For the time being, the activities of EUMM Georgia focus on the regions bordering South Ossetia and Abkhazia, which in the course of the conflict were temporarily occupied by Russian troops and South Ossetian and Abkhazian separatists. However, in emphasising Georgia’s territorial integrity, the EU seeks to expand the operational area of its observers to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The mission comprises about 230 observers, including three police officers and one human rights expert from Austria.

The threat pirates are posing to commercial navigation in the seas off the Horn of Africa has significantly increased due to the lack of effective state control in large parts of Somalia and its coastal waters. In consequence, the UNSC adopted a number of resolutions to provide the legal basis authorising international naval forces to act against pirates in Somali waters. On 10 November, the EU decided to contribute to these efforts by establishing its first naval operation under the ESDP, EU NAVFOR Somalia (Operation “Ata-
Austria in the European Union

The mission Operation Atalanta (formerly known as Atalanta) aims to escort vessels of the UN World Food Programme headed for Somalia and other particularly endangered freight vessels and to conduct patrols in pirate-infested waters. Although Austria is not taking an active part in this operation, it successfully insisted during the preparation of the operation that it be made clear that persons suspected of piracy captured under Operation Atalanta may be delivered to third countries for further prosecution only if it has been ensured that the relevant human rights standards will be respected and, particularly, that these persons will not be threatened with capital punishment (see also Chapter E.III.3.14.4).

In March, the troops of the humanitarian military operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA reached full operational capability for the first time. The operation primarily aims at protecting the refugees from Darfur and the internally displaced persons in eastern Chad and the north-west of the Central African Republic, as well as the humanitarian aid personnel and the personnel of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). EUFOR Tchad/RCA was established as a one-year bridging operation, until the functions of the EU force are taken over by an operation under UN command. In line with this, the UN Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 1834 (2008) of 24 September to request preparations for the deployment of a new military component of the existing MINURCAT operation to follow up EUFOR Tchad/RCA as of 15 March 2009 (see also Chapter A.VI.10). The size of EUFOR Tchad/RCA amounted to up to 3,600 personnel; Austria participated in this mission with a contingent of up to 160 members of the Austrian Armed Forces.

In June, the mandate for the EUSEC RD Congo mission launched in 2005 was extended for one year. The mission supports the reform of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo both in the central departments in Kinshasa and the military commands at regional and provincial level, for example by systematically counting and recording all military personnel. Up to two Austrian officers have been participating in this mission since summer 2007.

In addition to EUSEC RD Congo, the police mission EUPOL RD Congo is the second mission conducted by the EU in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The aim of the mission is to advise and assist the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo in its reform of the national police forces and in improving cooperation between the police and judicial authorities. Austria is not taking part in this mission.

Since June, the EU has been supporting security sector reform in Guinea-Bissau, particularly the re-structuring of the armed forces, police, border control and judicial authorities, with its EU SSR Guinea-Bissau mission. Recently, Guinea-Bissau has increasingly become a transit country for drug trafficking from Latin America to Europe, whereby the country’s security authorities are faced with considerable difficulties in addressing these challenges. Austria does not participate in this mission.
The European Union’s External Relations

In November 2005, the EU established the border assistance mission at Rafah crossing point between the Gaza Strip and Egypt (EU BAM Rafah), based on an agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government. Since June 2007, the border crossing point has been closed in consequence of the takeover of the Gaza Strip by Hamas. The mission carried on its operations with reduced staff size in order to continue its training activities and enable a swift reopening of the border crossing point should the situation change. A female Austrian customs expert participated in EU BAM Rafah before the closure of the border crossing point. Austria will be able to swiftly resume its participation in the event that the border crossing point is reopened.

The EU police mission in the Palestinian territories (EUPOL COPPS), launched at the beginning of 2006, supports the Palestinian civilian police in the establishment of sustained and effective policing structures in line with international standards. The Rule of Law section of EUPOL COPPS, established in the summer to focus primarily on the further development of the interface between police and judicial authorities, was prepared by an Austrian judge and is now headed by an expert from the Federal Ministry of Justice. In addition, Austria supported the mission by seconding two police officers and another legal expert.

Since July 2005, the EU has been operating the integrated rule of law mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX) at the invitation of the Iraqi government. The aim is to contribute to the development of a modern police and judicial sector in Iraq in line with western rule-of-law standards and respect for human rights by providing training courses for high-ranking Iraqi experts from the spheres of policing, criminal justice and law enforcement. The courses are not held in Iraq but in EU Member States or other countries in the region. By the end of the year about 1,800 senior officials of the Iraqi police, judicial and penal authorities had been trained in numerous courses held in EU Member States. Austria supported the mission from the outset by seconding instructors from the fields of policing and justice. In 2008, a training course for senior officials of the Iraqi penal authorities held at the Judicial Academy in Schwechat was the first of these events to be hosted by Austria.

The EU Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL Afghanistan) was launched in June 2007 to support the Afghan government in building up an independent civilian police force in line with international standards. Austria does not take part in this mission.

1.2.2. Development of Civilian and Military Crisis Management Capabilities

After the activities undertaken to accomplish the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 to further develop the EU’s civilian crisis management capabilities were successfully concluded in December 2007, the EU launched efforts to implement
the new **Civilian Headline Goal 2010**. The most important projects include the formulation of recommendations and guidelines for the recruitment of personnel to civilian EU crisis management missions, the preparation of a basic concept for administrative and logistical support to these missions and the systematic recording of potential third country contributions to improve civilian ESDP capabilities. Austria committed a total of 147 experts from different fields to the EU’s civilian crisis management missions.

One of the activities undertaken under the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 was the creation of a pool of about 100 specially trained experts from the EU Member States, who will form small special-purpose Civilian Response Teams (CRT) and can be deployed within a few days for civilian crisis management tasks. Austria has seconded two experts, one of whom participated in an investigative mission to extend the mandate of EUPOL COPPS.

The Progress Catalogue completed in 2007 is a systematic review of progress made to date and of remaining capability gaps. It provided the basis for the further development of military ESDP capabilities as part of the efforts to implement the **Military Headline Goal 2010**. The Headline Goal Task Force composed of military experts from all Member States elaborated proposals for specific measures to close identified capability gaps and rank these measures according to their priority. The European Defence Agency will assume an important role in the implementation of these proposals.

The **battle group concept** is one of the most important components of the Military Headline Goal 2010. Two of these 1,500-person-strong groups are on standby for a period of six months and can be deployed within a period of five to 15 days, if so required. In 2007, Austria declared its intention to contribute to the formation of a battle group in the first half of 2011 by providing about 100 military personnel to a group commanded by the Netherlands, which will also comprise troops from Germany, Finland and Lithuania. In spring 2008, Austria announced its participation in another battle group in the second half of 2012. The group will be commanded by Germany and will comprise troops from Croatia, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Macedonia. A decision on the number of personnel to be provided has not yet been taken.

1.2.3. Cooperation with other International Organisations

Practical crisis management measures take account of the fact that in most cases a large number of international organisations are active in the relevant operational area. This particularly calls for increased cooperation between the EU and other organisations, especially the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the OSCE and the African Union. The ESDP monitoring mission EUMM Georgia, which was launched in 2008, for example, closely coordinates its activities with the OSCE monitoring mission which has been operating in the area since 1992/1993 and the UN Monitoring Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG).
The successful cooperation between the EU and the UN was also reflected in Chad, where EUFOR Tchad/RCA collaborates closely with MINURCAT and will be replaced by UN troops in spring 2009.

Cooperation between the EU and NATO was continued, a specific example being the ESDP operation EUFOR Althea in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which draws on NATO facilities and capabilities. Moreover, the EU and NATO collaborate in crisis management operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, with the EU contributing civilian capabilities and NATO assuming military functions. In addition, the development of the EU’s military capabilities is closely coordinated with NATO, whose membership includes 21 EU Member States. In this way, it will be ensured that the requirements the EU and NATO impose on their Member States’ armed forces are compatible and complement each other.

Since December 2007, security-related cooperation between the EU and the AU has been based on the Joint EU-Africa Strategy adopted at that time at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon. The Strategy also includes a Peace and Security partnership and a specific action plan on its further development, the implementation of which was started in 2008.

2. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) aims at sharing the benefits of EU enlargement – peace, stability, security and prosperity – with the EU’s neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean region in a form other than EU membership. It applies to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. Cooperation under the ENP is based on the existing bilateral association, partnership and cooperation agreements. Specific objectives, such as the promotion of the rule of law, good governance or market economic principles, are agreed under individual multi-year Action Plans tailored to each partner country.

On 3 December, the European Commission presented ambitious proposals for the development of an Eastern Partnership with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus (depending on the development of its relations with the EU), Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This partnership provides for a new type of association agreement which may involve gradual integration into the EU’s economic area and enhanced mutual opening. Substantial progress was achieved in the related negotiations with Ukraine, which began in 2007. Negotiations on an enhanced and comprehensive free trade area were opened in February in the wake of the country’s accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The implementation of the Action Plans with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia was continued.
At the meeting of the EU-Israel Association Council of 16 June, a gradual upgrading of bilateral relations was decided. At its December meeting, the General Affairs and External Relations Council recognised the principle of a strengthened dialogue between the Union and Israel, pointing out that the deepening of relations should serve as an incentive to the Israeli government to take comprehensive action to improve the life of the Palestinian population and further advance the peace process. The EU opened negotiations with Libya on a Framework Agreement on cooperation in different areas. The negotiations for an Association Agreement with Syria were concluded and the Agreement was initialled in December. In consequence of the formation of the new Palestinian government, the implementation of the interim Association Agreement concluded in 1997 with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) on behalf of the Palestine Authority was resumed.

The EU’s external assistance programme is funded under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). For the next budgetary period (2007-2013), approximately 12 billion euros in EC funding are available for mechanisms like TAIEX – providing swift and short-term assistance – and long-term twinning arrangements.

3. South Eastern Europe / Western Balkans

3.1. Developments in the Individual States

3.1.1. Croatia

Following the parliamentary elections in November 2007, a coalition government led again by the head of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Ivo Sanader, was sworn in on 12 January.

On 12 March the Croatian Parliament decided to temporarily suspend the application to EU Member States of the Ecological and Fisheries Protection Zone (ZERP) – that had entered into force on 1 January - thus fulfilling an obligation towards the European Commission as well as Italy and Slovenia.

No progress was made with a view to the unresolved border issues between Croatia and Slovenia in the Bay of Piran and several sections of the land border. The European Commission maintained its position that this issue was an exclusively bilateral one (see Chapter A.II.1.). Croatia and Montenegro agreed to refer the issue of the course of the borderline in Prevlaka Bay to arbitration proceedings.

On 19 March Croatia, in conjunction with two other neighbouring states of Serbia, namely Hungary and Bulgaria, diplomatically recognised the Republic of Kosovo.

In January, Croatia took up its seat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the period from 2008 to 2009.
On 9 July the Protocol on Croatia’s **accession to NATO** was signed in Brussels.

The **OSCE Office** mandated with monitoring the war crimes proceedings held in Croatia as well as progress made with respect to unresolved issues in connection with the return of refugees continued the OSCE Mission’s work.

### 3.1.2. Macedonia

**Euro-Atlantic integration** is Macedonia’s declared foreign policy goal. The country’s aspirations to join NATO at the Organization’s April summit were, however, thwarted because of objections raised by Greece in regard to the naming issue.

The **early elections** held on 1 June were marked by numerous irregularities and acts of violence which required two partial election reruns. The recommendations contained in the critical election report prepared by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) were reflected in the new election law of October, which was to prepare the groundwork for the orderly conduct of the presidential and municipal elections scheduled for March 2009. The election coalition led by the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity (VMRO-DPMNE) of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, emerged victorious from the parliamentary elections, winning the absolute majority. Due to the participation of the strongest Albanian party, the Democratic Union for Integration (DUI), the new government was able to secure a two-thirds majority and the majority of the deputies representing national minorities. The first few post-election weeks were marked by the opposition’s boycott of parliament and the fast-track adoption of numerous laws by the governing majority.

The European Commission’s **progress report** published on 5 November was mainly critical of the conduct of the elections and the lack of political dialogue, but did not contain the hoped-for starting date for accession negotiations. In contrast to the two previous years, the government accepted the report in a self-critical manner. At the beginning of December it presented an Action Plan outlining how Macedonia intends to remove, on its way towards EU membership, the obstacles and deficiencies addressed by the report. Progress was achieved in the talks on visa liberalisation launched in February.

On 9 October Macedonia recognised **Kosovo’s independence**. Serbia responded by expelling the Macedonian ambassador.

No progress was achieved in the **name dispute with Greece**. As a result of disagreements between President Branko Crvenkovski and Prime Minister Gruevski on the Macedonian negotiation line, President Crvenkovski recalled state negotiator Nikola Dimitrov. The relations with Greece were further strained by new questions, such as the issue of the Macedonian minority
in the North of Greece. On 17 November, Macedonia instituted proceedings against Greece before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a violation of the Interim Accord of 1995 because the latter had objected at the Bucharest Summit to Macedonia’s application to join NATO. Just before the end of the year, the Pan-European Transport Corridor X and the soccer stadium in Skopje were named after Alexander the Great and Phillip II respectively, which gave rise to further irritations on the Greek side.

3.1.3. Albania
The invitation to join NATO, extended at the NATO summit held in Bucharest between 2 and 4 April, was a major foreign policy success for Albania. The country also achieved an important milestone in the European context with the entering into force of the visa facilitation agreement. The next goals announced by the government led by Prime Minister Sali Berisha are full visa liberalisation and the application for EU candidate status.

At regional policy level, the first official visit by a Kosovar Prime Minister after independence paid by Hashim Thaci to Tirana on 19 and 20 June marked an important event. Bilateral relations are dominated by the two major topics of economic cooperation and the establishment of close infrastructure links between the two countries, particularly in the fields of energy and transport. In the political and business fields, the European Commission’s balanced progress report stressed the achievements of Albania’s reform policy while at the same time pointing out the deficits that still remained. At a domestic level the country’s political atmosphere was over long periods marked by the willingness to engage in consensus displayed by the two major parties, the governing Democratic Party and the opposition Socialist Party. There were, however, a number of problematic events including numerous corruption affairs and the disastrous explosion of an ammunition depot that occurred in a suburb of Tirana in March. These events temporarily put the goals of a large-scale judicial reform and a fundamental reform of the electoral law pursued by both the Berisha government, the EU and OSCE on the back burner. On 21 April, the relevant constitutional provisions regarding the election mode were changed in that the mixed direct and proportional election system applied thus far was transformed into a simple regional proportional election system. The second half of the year saw the emergence of a heated debate on the opening of Communist secret service files and on the introduction of a law regarding the screening of leading public officials, including the judiciary. After an intensive parliamentary debate the governing majority adopted the law on 15 December.

3.1.4. Montenegro
The paramount goal pursued by the Montenegrin government is membership of both EU and NATO. In order to underline the importance of this aspira-
The European Union’s External Relations

tion, Prime Minister Željko Šturanović, who resigned on health grounds in February, even called his cabinet a “Brussels government”. This setting of priorities was continued by his successor, Milo Đukanović, who has been in office since 29 February.

The first half of the year saw the launch of intensive discussions with the European Commission and the Member States on Montenegro’s potential application for EU membership. The broad consensus among the country’s politicians and the public at large on a future EU membership encouraged the Montenegrin government to further pursue this goal. Hence consultations eventually focused on determining the appropriate timing for submitting the application. In the presence of Commissioner Olli Rehn, Prime Minister Milo Đukanović subsequently presented Montenegro’s application for EU membership to French President Nicolas Sarkozy as President of the EU Council in Paris on 15 December.

On 4 July, Austria notified the ratification of the SAA, signed with Montenegro in October 2007, with the depository, the Secretary-General of the Council of the EU. The SAA, which had been ratified by the Montenegrin parliament in November 2007, was ratified by twelve EU Member States and the European Parliament by the end of the year.

The recognition of Kosovo’s independence by Montenegro on 9 October and the subsequent expulsion of the Montenegrin ambassador by Serbia temporarily clouded the otherwise good relations with the country’s largest neighbour.

At the presidential elections on 6 April, the incumbent Filip Vujanović won 52.3 per cent of the votes in the very first ballot.

3.1.5. Bosnia and Herzegovina

After lengthy negotiations on police reform and several delays due to technical problems, the SAA was signed on 16 June. The Interim Agreement had already come into force on 1 July. Although the signing of the SAA had contributed to calming the domestic policy climate, the electoral campaign for the local elections of 5 October saw a renewed flare up of nationalist rhetoric. In these elections the nationalist parties achieved the best results. There are only limited clearly non-nationalist political alternatives that are recognised by all ethnic groups and voters only partly acknowledge such alternatives.

The international community continues to press inter alia for the implementation of police reform, administrative reform as well as reforms in the broadcasting sector, a solution to the status of the Brčko District, and a reform of the country’s constitution. These central issues are part of the goals and conditions defined as a prerequisite for the closure of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which were adopted upon suggestion by the High Representative and EUSR Miroslav Lajčák in February by the International Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), which has the
authority to make decisions. With respect to the necessary reforms, the country’s authorities were, however, not able to make substantial progress. Consequently, the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council decided on 19 and 20 November to continue to maintain the OHR. However, domestic policy discussions revealed that this repeated postponement of the OHR’s closure exacerbated both the Office’s work and the High Representative’s/EUSR’s position.

See Chapter A.VI.1.2.1 for the EUFOR-Althea EU Military Operation.

3.1.6. Serbia

During the first six months the Kosovo issue dominated the agenda. On 17 February the then “southern Serbian province” proclaimed its independence. This step triggered protests, some of which violent, which were primarily directed at Western embassies and corporate branch offices. Some Austrian companies also suffered minor property damage.

On 28 February, Austria recognised Kosovo’s independence. Subsequently, Austria was also affected by the measures directed by the Serbian government in an action plan against recognising states. As part of these measures the Serbian ambassador was, for instance, recalled to Belgrade to report and a communication ban was imposed at ministerial and state secretary level. At the end of July, however, only a few weeks after the formation of a new government in Serbia, these measures were lifted for EU Member States.

With the adoption of an UNGA resolution on 8 October, Serbia succeeded in its request to have the issue of the legality of Kosovo’s declaration of independence referred to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

The re-election of President Boris Tadić in the presidential elections held on 3 February, the success of the Democratic Party (DS) led by him at the parliamentary elections on 11 May, and the formation of a DS-led government strengthened both the President and his party. This was also illustrated in the split of the Radical Party (SRS) in September and the subsequent formation of the Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) led by Tomislav Nikolić.

The success of the pro-European parties in the parliamentary elections is attributed inter alia to the signing of the SAA with the EU on 29 April. Due to a lack of consensus on the part of the EU, it was impossible to both start the ratification process for the SAA and apply the Interim Agreement. Some EU Member States hold the view that the criterion of full cooperation with the ICTY has not yet been fulfilled by Serbia since the main indictee in the case of the Srebrenica massacre, Ratko Mladić, is still at large. Serbia demonstrated its clear willingness to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia with the arrest and extradition in June and July of two further main ICTY indictees, including the Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić.
Austria honours the efforts the new Serbian government is undertaking to make progress in the process of EU integration and in the field of visa liberalisation. Within the EU, Austria is thus working at taking concrete steps in order to help sustain both the strength of the pro-European government in Serbia and the Serbian people’s high approval of the EU.

3.1.7. Kosovo

On 17 February Kosovo declared its independence. In its declaration of independence the new republic commits itself to fully implementing the so-called “Ahtisaari Plan”. The plan, named after the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) for the Future Status of Kosovo includes a comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement providing inter alia for the sovereignty of Kosovo to be monitored by the international community and a number of measures to guarantee the rights of the minorities living in Kosovo, in particular the Kosovo Serbs.

The new Kosovar constitution entered into force on 15 June. The essential items set out in the Ahtisaari Plan had been included in this constitution, thus enshrining the principle of limited sovereignty. It also guarantees the comprehensive protection of the minorities living in Kosovo and contains a number of provisions relating to the future international presence.

By the end of December, 53 states, including the majority of the EU Member States, had recognised Kosovo as an independent state. Austria recognised the independence of the Republic of Kosovo on 28 February. On 20 March, diplomatic relations were established and the Austrian Office was turned into an Embassy. Serbia, from which Kosovo seceded by its declaration of independence, does, however, not recognise Kosovo’s independence and still considers Kosovo to be part of Serbia.

Expressing their protest against the declaration of independence, the Serbs, who are the most significant minority in Kosovo both in terms of numbers and politically, either participated to a very small extent or not at all in the political life of the Kosovar institutions. Immediately after 17 February, hundreds of Serbian employees at public institutions stopped work. Moreover, demonstrations were held on an almost daily basis in the Serbian enclaves against Kosovo’s independence.

The entering into effect of the Kosovar constitution also led to a fundamental change in the international presence in Kosovo. UNMIK, established in 1999, reduced its presence and handed over essential competences, particularly in the field of the rule of law, to the Kosovar institutions and/or EULEX KOSOVO (see Chapter A.VI.1.2.). The OSCE Mission in Kosovo continues to form part of UNMIK and has been headed by the Austrian diplomat Werner Almhofer since 1 October. What is new is the International Civilian Office (ICO), equipped by the Kosovar constitution with executive powers in those areas that relate to the implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan. The military
Austria in the European Union

arm of the international presence is NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR) with about 16,000 troops mandated with creating and securing a safe and secure environment. Under the Partnership for Peace (PfP), Austria takes part in KFOR and with about 650 soldiers Austria is the largest non-NATO provider of troops.

4. The Eastern European States

4.1. Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus

4.1.1. Ukraine

Ukraine is an ENP target country. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), in effect since 1998, and the EU Action Plan, applied under the ENP since February 2005, form the basis of the country’s relations with the EU. Negotiations on a new enhanced agreement as a successor to the PCA were launched in February 2007. The goal is to enable ambitious high-level cooperation in key areas aimed at bringing Ukraine closer to the EU in as many areas as possible. The readmission agreement and the visa facilitation agreement that entered into force on 1 January, and Ukraine’s accession to the WTO on 16 May were important steps taken in this direction. At the annual EU-Ukraine summit, which took place in Evian on 9 September, it was decided that the PCA successor agreement be renamed association agreement. November saw the launching of the EU-Ukraine dialogue on visa liberalisation. Austria considers Ukraine a model case for ENP.

The EU is the largest foreign donor in the Ukraine. Following the expiry of the TACIS Programme and the transition to the ENPI, the funds earmarked for Ukraine saw a substantial increase and amount to 494 million euros for the period 2007-2010. Added to this amount, the country receives a further roughly 20 million euros annually from other programmes. Cooperation under the EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) has proven very successful. The EU is Ukraine’s largest trading partner, slightly ahead of Russia.

The cabinet composed of the “Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc” (BYuT) and the “Our Ukraine - People’s Self Defence Bloc” (OU-PSD) associated with President Victor Yushchenko was formed in December 2007 and led by Prime Minister Tymoschenko. However, right from the outset on it was marked by internal tensions. Personal differences and the political aspirations of the two major players made pragmatic cooperation on the basis of similar value systems within this “orange coalition” difficult. Positions diverged particularly with respect to issues like inflation, privatisation, the solution of the gas conflict with Russia and reform of the constitution. The Georgia conflict did not only lead to the largest severe test of Ukrainian-Russian relations since the former’s independence, but also aggravated the differences between the President, who clearly showed support for Georgia, and the Prime Minister.
In response to a vote in Parliament where the BYuT together with the oppositional Party of Regions (PR) had voted in favour of curtailing the President’s competences, the OU-PSD announced its withdrawal from the coalition on 2 September. In October, President Yushchenko took the offensive and signed an order to dissolve Parliament and hold snap elections on 7 December. BYuT emphatically opposed this launching of an election initiative calling it illegal. President Yushchenko postponed the election date for an indefinite period. As a consequence of the serious impact which the Ukraine suffered as a result of the global financial and economic crisis, another “orange coalition”, also involving the “Lytvyn Bloc“, was formed on 16 December.

Against the backdrop of a credit crisis and a current account deficit of about 15 billion US dollars attributable to the strong devaluation of the country’s national currency and high inflation, the Prime Minister asked for a meeting with IMF representatives that was held in October. Ukraine had applied for financial assistance of 14 billion US dollars in total and was eventually granted even 16.4 billion US dollars. In order to be able to fulfil the IMF requirements, the Ukrainian government decided to adopt a comprehensive set of measures. On 21 October, the President suspended his decree on the dissolution of Parliament to enable the parliamentary debate on this government decision.

The negotiations with Russia on the definition of gas prices for the first quarter of 2009 failed on 31 December.

4.1.2. Moldova

Under the new government led by Zinaida Greceanii, the principal focus of Moldovan foreign policy on the EU was intensified in April. The goal of future EU integration is pursued by all parties. In October, the EU Council decided to start negotiations on a new Partnership Agreement under which the Moldovan government’s major objectives are trade and visa facilitations. In the lead-up to the parliamentary elections scheduled for 2009, attempts directed at restricting freedom of the media and controversial enactments which, for instance, made it difficult for small parties to be represented in parliament or banned individuals holding dual citizenship from running for a seat in parliament, prompted the recommendation by the Council of Europe to amend these enactments on the one hand and calls by the EU to respect and guarantee both the pluralist democracy and the freedom of the media on the other.

Moldova played an active role in regional initiatives in South Eastern Europe, holding the chair in several of these on a rotational basis. In this context, for instance, the Central European Initiative (CEI) held its Economic Forum and the tourism conference in October, while the CEI Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Government met in November.
Moldova takes part in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and being the rotating chair it organised a meeting of CIS Prime Ministers in November. At this conference talks with Russia focused particularly on dismantling still existing trade barriers and the autonomy status of the Gagausia region with a view to the potential solution of the Transnistria conflict that has been frozen since

In the conflict concerning the separatist region of Transnistria, the EU advocated the strengthening of confidence-building measures. In this context the EUSR for Moldova, Kalman Mizsei, held numerous talks and undertook several visits to explore and mediate in the conflict. For OSCE and Moldova/Transnistria see Chapter B.II.2.2.

The EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova/Ukraine also contributes to strengthening the security situation in the region.

4.1.3. Belarus

Ever since the beginnings of the authoritarian regime of President Alexander Lukashenko the EU has adopted and successively tightened restrictive measures against Belarus. Following the release of all political prisoners and the achievement of “certain progress” at the parliamentary elections in September, the EU restrictions were relaxed: the visa ban against President Lukashenko and the majority of members and officials of the Belarusian leadership who had been on a black list, was temporarily suspended for a period of six months starting from 13 October and the restrictions on bilateral intergovernmental contacts in force since 1997 were also lifted. Further positive steps in the relations between the EU and Belarus were the opening of an office of the Delegation of the European Commission to Belarus in Minsk in March and a meeting of the EU Foreign Ministers in the Troika format and Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov in Brussels in October at which the EU’s High Representative Javier Solana reconfirmed the Union’s resolve to open a new chapter in its relations with Belarus. In November, Belarus announced that it would allow the printing and distribution of two independent newspapers that had previously been forbidden. In December, Belarus responded positively to a communication by the European Commission on the future Eastern Partnership. Should it become a member of this Partnership, Belarus expects to benefit particularly in the fields of business and national security.

As a result of the international economic crisis, the financial pressure on Belarus increased. In December, it succeeded in agreeing with Russia on a favourable price for gas supplies in 2009 and on the granting of loans by both Russia and the IMF amounting to 2 billion US dollars and 2.5 billion dollars respectively.
4.2. South Caucasus

The three South Caucasian states Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia continued their rapprochement with Euro-Atlantic structures. Through the envisaged Eastern Partnership the three states intend forging closer ties with the EU.

At the early elections held in Georgia on 5 January, President Mikheil Saakashvili was re-elected in the first ballot. The governing United National Movement emerged as the clear winner in the parliamentary elections held on 21 May.

At the presidential elections held in Armenia on 19 February, the then Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan was elected Head of State. The election result was, however, not recognised by the opposition which eventually lead to bloody unrest and the temporary imposition of a state of emergency.

The presidential elections held in Azerbaijan on 15 October resulted in the expected re-election of the incumbent Ilham Aliyev.

According to international observers all elections held in the region were despite some irregularities in principle conducted correctly.

The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia led to repeated tensions arising between Georgia and Russia. In this context, Georgia accused Russia of no longer acting as mediator but as party, since Russia had taken steps in spring implying a de facto recognition of Abkhazia. August saw an armed confrontation between Georgian and Russian troops in South Ossetia, in the course of which Russian units advanced deep into the Georgian heartland. Mediation by the EU Presidency led to the cessation of the fighting and the withdrawal of Russian troops in October, who, however, remained garrisoned in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. EU observers were dispatched to the buffer zones between the two territories and the area controlled by the Georgian government. Following Russia’s recognition of Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence, Georgia broke off its diplomatic relations with Russia and left the CIS (see also Chapter B.II.2.4.).

Since October talks on stability and security in South Caucasus have been held in Geneva under the aegis of the EU, OSCE and UN. These talks are headed by the EUSR for Georgia Pierre Morel and focus particularly on the issue of Georgia-Abkhazia-South Ossetia-Russia. For the OSCE Mission see Chapter B.II.2.4.

The Georgia conflict has clearly impaired the efforts undertaken by the EUSR for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby to resolve the territorial conflicts in the region.

Moreover, the armed clashes also had a negative impact on the economy in the region, which had until then been characterised by strong growth. At a donors’ conference, the international community held out the prospect of supporting Georgia with 3.5 billion euros to improve the humanitarian situation and build up the country’s economy.
For the **Nagorno-Karabakh conflict** see Chapter B.II.2.3.

5. Russia

At the beginning of May, the First Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Government, Dimitrij Medvedev, took over office as President of Russia while President Vladimir Putin assumed office as Head of Government. With the statements he had made on topics like democracy, the rule of law, fundamental freedoms, civil society and business in his electoral campaign, Medvedev had positioned himself as a comparatively liberal politician. The goal is to make the “energy super power” Russia a modern attractive location for innovative industries. The new President, however, only implemented the announced reforms to a limited extent as the war in Georgia and the subsequent financial crisis took priority and called for his capabilities in crisis management. In contrast to his announcement, the state’s influence on business was not lessened but rather increased in the course of the economic crisis.

Russia’s new foreign policy concept, published in July, reflects Moscow’s increased self-confidence on the international stage. Russia is a proponent of a multi-polar world order and strives to bring its influence to bear on all important international issues. In this context, the policy pursued towards the **CIS**, the area which Russia considers its economic and security policy sphere of interest, enjoys top priority. Russia focuses its attention on new integration structures with CIS states that are willing to cooperate with Russia, i.e. the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEc), the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) that reaches beyond the CIS region and fosters cooperation in the economic and security policy areas. Moscow vehemently objects to Georgia’s and Ukraine’s aspirations to join NATO and also has reservations about EU initiatives in the CIS region, such as the newly conceived Eastern Partnership (See Chapter A.VI.4.2.).

At the EU-Russia Summit in Khanty-Mansiysk, held at the end of June, the green light was given on launching negotiations on a new **EU-Russia Framework Agreement** which is to replace the PCA from the 1990s. In response to the Russian military intervention in Georgia, the negotiations were interrupted by the EU and resumed by a Council decision in November. The long-term perspective of a free trade area between the EU and Russia, already mentioned in the old agreement, continues to remain a long-term perspective. Besides, a free trade agreement is considered possible only once Russia has become a member of the WTO.

Since 2005, regular, six-monthly EU-Russia **human rights consultations** have been held to promote the common European values that underpin the partnership between Russia and the EU. During these deliberations, the EU specifically addresses topics like freedom of the media, freedom of opinion and freedom of assembly, the functioning of civil society, respect for minority
The European Union’s External Relations

rights, the fight against xenophobia, the protection of women’s and children’s rights as well as the human rights situation in North Caucasus.

The Russian financial and business markets were substantially impacted by the international financial crisis. The government adopted several packages of measures totalling 210 billion euros in order to stabilise the financial sector. These measures could, however, not prevent the continuing outflow of capital. Moreover, the decline in export earnings caused by the crumbling petrol prices led to a gradual devaluation of the rouble, which, combined with the high import rate for consumer goods contributed to a further rise in inflation. For the first time in many years, industrial production shrank and general economic growth experienced a marked slowdown. At the end of the year, inflation coupled with unemployment gave rise to the growing concern that the economic crisis might have serious social consequences.

6. Central Asia

The EU’s Strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia, adopted in 2007, translated into the Union’s enhanced commitment in this region, involving the elaboration of priorities for cooperation with the individual Central Asian countries, the doubling of the EU funds to 750 million euros for the period from 2007 to 2013 and more intensified political dialogue. On 9 and 10 April, the EU Troika at EU foreign minister level and Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner met with the five foreign ministers of Central Asia in Ashgabat (Turkmenistan); on 17 and 18 September an EU-Central Asia Security Forum dealing with combating human trafficking, terrorism, extremism and proliferation, energy security and environmental safety was held in Paris; on 27 and 28 September Brussels was the venue for a conference dealing with the rule of law. The EU held human rights dialogues with all Central Asian countries.

At the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council meeting on 16 September, the Union praised the active and stabilising role played by the country in the region while at the same time pointing out the necessity for strengthening the investment climate. A conference on regional water management was held in Almaty on 17 and 18 November. Against the background of the international financial crisis, the Kazakh government adopted a 10-billion-US-dollar plan aimed at stabilising the country’s banking and real estate sector, small and medium sized companies, agriculture, infrastructure and innovation. With a view to its OSCE Chairmanship in 2010 Kazakhstan launched reforms relating to the media, elections and political parties.

The EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council of 23 July dealt primarily with such topics as political stability, reform process, good governance, human rights and regional cooperation. Energy shortage and high inflation rates, however, led to a deterioration in the situation of the Kyrgyz population. Although the country’s legislation imposes restrictions on the freedom of association and
freedom of the media, Kyrgyzstan is considered the most liberal and open of the countries in the region.

By the end of the year 22 EU Member States, including Austria, had ratified the PCA signed between the EU and Tajikistan. The country is particularly interested in enhanced cooperation to develop its hydro power. The energy shortage also led to a deterioration in the Tajik population’s situation. On 8 April, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner paid a visit to Tajikistan. On the initiative of the EU Council Presidency, a conference on border management and drug control was held in Dushanbe on 21 and 22 October. The conference’s final declaration emphasised the coordinating role played by the Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI), a coordination platform to improve border security that is composed of nine EU Member States and Croatia and headed by Austria (Federal Ministry of the Interior).

By the end of the year eleven EU Member States, including Austria, had ratified the PCA signed between the EU and Turkmenistan. On 10 April, Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner opened the Europe House in Ashgabat. On the occasion of the visit by Commissioner Andris Piebalgs to Ashgabat on 26 May, an agreement on cooperation in the energy sector was signed by the EU and Turkmenistan. On 3 December the EU organised a conference dealing with the environment and water management in Ashgabat. In the course of the country’s constitutional reform the multi-party system was introduced on 26 September. At the early parliamentary elections held on 14 December, the Democratic Party of Turkmenistan won all seats. Although it had been invited, the OSCE did not consider the conditions warranted election monitoring.

At the EU-Uzbekistan Cooperation Council, held in Brussels on 16 September, both sides expressed their wish to strengthen mutual relations. In this context, the EU, however, underlined the need for improvements in the fields of both human and fundamental rights in Uzbekistan. Measures implemented at the beginning of the year including the abolition of the death penalty, the introduction of habeas corpus and the release of human rights activists translated in April in a suspension of travel restrictions for leading party officials for a further six months. In October, some of the restrictions in force since 2005 were lifted, including, for instance, the travel restrictions, which were fully lifted. The arms embargo, however, was extended for a further twelve months.

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

7.1. Middle East Peace Process

With hindsight, the year 2008 was a year of missed opportunities for the Middle East Peace Process. At the end of 2007, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and the President of the Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas had made a joint commitment at the International Conference in Annapolis to
The European Union’s External Relations

resume the negotiation process on the realisation of the “Two-State Solution” which had been broken off by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in 2001. The objective defined for this negotiation process was to clarify all outstanding issues – borders, security, Jerusalem, settlements, refugees and water – by the end of 2008 and to implement the respective commitments under the Road Map. The United States was to “monitor and judge” the fulfilment of these commitments. At a donors’ conference held in Paris in December 2007, the international community had confirmed its readiness to continue its support for the peace process, pledging approximately 7.5 billion US dollars to support the Palestinian reform and development programme over the next three years.

Negotiation teams led by Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni and/or former Speaker of the Palestinian Parliament and subsequent Prime Minister Ahmed Qrei’a met for regular rounds of negotiations to seek resolutions to concrete issues. At the same time the two highest-ranking decision-makers, PM Olmert and President Abbas, assured each other of the serious nature of their efforts in the struggle for a comprehensive political solution. Despite all this, the individual negotiation rounds did not produce visible progress that could have secured broader political support in the population.

PM Olmert’s resignation announcement on 20 July in reaction to the start of legal investigations in connection with corruption allegations made against him as well as the fact that the formation of a new government by his successor at the head of the “Kadima” Party, Tzipi Livni, failed on 26 October, meant that substantial progress in the negotiations with the Palestinian side could no longer be expected. Elections for the Knesset were scheduled for 10 February 2009.

In parallel to the Israeli-Palestinian rounds of negotiations, four rounds of indirect talks – which also opened up prospects for direct negotiations – were held with mediation by Turkey between May and July on the Golan Heights, which were occupied by Israel in 1967 and have been annexed since 1980. However, the resignation of the Israeli Prime Minister and Syria’s hesitation to deepen talks with Israel without participation of the United States, brought these negotiations to a standstill.

The peace process came to a halt when the six-month truce between Israel and Hamas, mediated by Egypt in June, expired without extension, the Gaza Strip remained blocked and Israel resumed its military action in the Gaza Strip while Hamas resumed firing missiles into southern Israel. On 27 December, the Israeli forces started to launch massive air strikes against targets in the Gaza Strip with the declared goal of destroying Hamas’ armed structures in order to bring an end to the threat the missile fire from the Gaza Strip posed to the civilian population in southern Israel. In a press statement issued on 28 December, the UN Secretary General called upon the parties to immediately stop all acts of violence and military activities.
Austria in the European Union

In contrast to these developments, progress was made in Lebanon. Mediated by Qatar and the League of Arab States, government and opposition agreed in Doha (Qatar) on 21 May on electing a president and on the composition of a government of national unity. This agreement not only led to an increasing stabilisation of the country, but also to the beginnings of a rapprochement with Syria. On 14 October regular diplomatic relations were taken up for the first time between Lebanon and Syria.

Austria also contributed to this positive development. Together with the Lebanese government, the European Commission and the League of Arab States, Austria organised a donors’ conference in Vienna on 23 June for the reconstruction of the Palestinian refugee camp Nahr el-Bared in northern Lebanon, which had been destroyed in 2007. A clear improvement of the situation and living conditions of the Palestinian refugee population in Lebanon is playing a pivotal role in the country’s sensitive domestic policy structure. Responsibility for the reconstruction of the refugee camp was assumed jointly by the government of Lebanon and the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

7.2. Middle East

In Iraq, domestic policy developments are supported by the EU through numerous initiatives aimed at national reconciliation, offering assistance in the fields of constitutional revision, return of refugees and strengthening the capacity of the Iraqi Parliament. In January 2009, elections based on the provincial election law adopted on 25 September are scheduled to be held in 14 of the country’s 18 provinces, and at a later date in Kirkuk and in the three provinces of the Kurdish region. These provincial elections will be the first elections to be both organised and monitored exclusively by Iraq. The EU also supports the Iraqi authorities in the necessary improvement of basic services. In response to the humanitarian crisis in the country, the European Commission had made available approximately 141 million euros until the end of 2008 to help and assist refugees in and outside of Iraq. Other priorities set by the EU include strengthening the rule of law and promoting human rights, for instance by continuing with the European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq EUJUST LEX (see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.).

Negotiations between the EU and Iraq on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement were continued.

Based on the Club of Paris debt relief agreement signed in December 2005 that provides for a cancellation of 80 per cent of the Iraqi debt by the end of 2008, Austria wrote off about 1.7 billion euros. Austria was the sixth-largest – and measured in terms of the share of the Austrian population the largest – creditor of Iraq.

The developments in connection with the Iranian nuclear programme were followed with concern by the international community. By adopting Reso-
The United Nations Security Council for the third time imposed sanctions against Iran (see Chapter E.III.3.3.). On 15 October the resolution was adopted by a Common Position of the Council of the EU and implemented on 10 November by a Commission Regulation. On 19 November, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated in its fifth report since November 2007 that the doubts the Agency had with respect to the existence of possible military dimensions to Iran’s nuclear programme were not dispelled.

The EU still considers the so-called dual-track approach (diplomatic negotiations with Iran in parallel with a tightening of sanctions in the event of non-cooperation) as the appropriate procedure. In line with this approach a number of meetings were held with Iran. At the meeting held in the “E3+3” format (i.e. the two permanent EU members of the UNSC, France and the United Kingdom, and Germany plus the three other permanent members of the Security Council China, Russia and the USA) in Geneva in July, the USA, represented by Under Secretary of State William Burns, took part in these talks with Iran for the first time.

7.3. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Union for the Mediterranean)

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership between the EU and its partners in the Mediterranean has existed since 1995 and is also known as the Barcelona Process named after the city it was founded in.

In implementing the recommendations adopted at the First Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Scientific Research in Cairo in 2007, the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI) in Piran-Portorož (Slovenia) was opened during Slovenia’s EU Presidency on 9 June 2008.

In order to enhance the relations between the EU and its partner countries in the Mediterranean, the French EU Presidency hosted a summit in Paris on 13 July at which the Barcelona Process: Union for the Mediterranean was launched. Moreover, the partners decided that the sole presidency of the country holding the rotating EU Council Presidency will be replaced by a co-presidency of the EU and a Mediterranean partner country. On the Mediterranean side, Egypt was chosen to assume the co-presidency for a period of two years. Furthermore, it was decided to establish a joint secretariat and to hold biennial summits at the Heads of State and Government level. In order to enhance visibility, six priority areas for projects were identified: depollution of the Mediterranean, maritime and land highways, civil protection, alternative energies (Mediterranean solar plan), higher education and research (Euro-Mediterranean University), and the Euro-Mediterranean business development initiative directed specifically at small- and medium sized enterprises. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Monaco and Montenegro were welcomed as new Euro-Med partners. Libya was not represented at the Paris
summit and neither has it since assumed its role as observer in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Different readings of the summit document regarding future participation of the League of Arab States obstructed works within the Partnership for several months. At the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, held in Marseille on 3 and 4 November, it was eventually possible to resolve this open issue and it was decided that the League of Arab States was to participate as an observer in all of the Partnership’s meetings at all levels – and not only at foreign ministers’ conferences as had been the case so far. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs also resolved to shorten the Partnership’s name to **Union for the Mediterranean** and agreed on Barcelona as the Secretariat’s seat. It was, moreover, decided that the Secretary General was to be chosen from a southern partner country for the first three-year term in office. Finally, the foreign affairs ministers adopted a comprehensive work programme for 2009.

Apart from at the summit and the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs, **Euromed ministers** met on numerous other occasions, including for the Euromed Ministerial Meetings on Information Society held in Cairo (Egypt) on 26 and 27 February, on Tourism in Fez (Morocco) on 2 and 3 April, on Cultural Policy and Intercultural Dialogue in Athens (Greece) on 29 and 30 May, on Trade and Finances in Luxembourg on 7 October, on Industry in Nice (France) on 5 and 6 November, on Employment and Labour in Marrakech (Morocco) on 9 and 10 November, on Health in Cairo on 16 and 17 November, and on Water at the Dead Sea in Jordan on 22 December.

The plenary of the **Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly** was held at the Dead Sea in Jordan on 12 and 13 October. For a period of one year, Stefan Schennach, member of the Austrian Federal Council, was elected chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water.

For the Anna Lindh Foundation see Chapter K.VIII.2.

### 7.4. Organisations Furthering Multilateral Cooperation

#### 7.4.1. Gulf Co-operation Council

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

On 26 May Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik participated in the 18th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Brussels. The session’s agenda was
The European Union’s External Relations

again topped by the negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the EU and the GCC ongoing since 1991. The agreement focuses on putting cooperation in this key region on a new and broader basis. The controversial issues are related to taxes, energy and the inclusion of political issues, particularly human rights and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Although further rounds of negotiations were conducted until the end of the year, agreement was not reached.

At the GCC Summit in Muscat on 30 and 31 December Oman took over the GCC chair for a period of one year.

8. North America

8.1. United States of America

The most prominent event of the year was the presidential and congressional elections held on 4 November, from which the Democratic Party emerged as the clear winner. With a turn-out of about 66 per cent, Senator Barack Obama won the votes of 365 electors, while 173 votes went to his competitor Senator John McCain. Although expressed in percentage of votes cast, the result was rather less striking with Obama winning 52.9 per cent and McCain 45.7 per cent, it was nevertheless generally considered a broad mandate in favour of the new President. The topic of ethnic background and the potential flaring up of racist tendencies – which had given rise to numerous discussions in the lead-up to these elections – eventually played a far smaller role than many had originally assumed.

Prior to the elections on 4 November, the Republican Party and the Democratic Party both had 49 seats each in the Senate. Two independent senators are associated with the Democratic camp. In total 35 seats (Republican Party 23 and Democratic Party 12) were up for re-election. The Democrats succeeded in clearly increasing their number of seats. The term of office of the 111th Congress is due to start on 3 January 2009. At the end of the year the number of seats temporarily allocated to the Democratic Party, including the two independent Senators, amounted to 59 in total, while 41 seats were temporarily allocated to the Republican Party. Since the outcome of the elections was challenged in court in Minnesota the final result had not yet been determined by the end of the year.

In the House of Representatives, all 435 seats were up for election on 4 November. Compared to the outcome of the 2006 elections, the Democratic Party succeeded in expanding its majority of seats by 22 to 257, while the Republicans lost 21 seats, now having 178 members in the House of Representatives. One vacant mandate went to the Democratic Party.

On 4 November, a number of US States also held popular referenda on more than 153 bills. Their results went to show that in spite of the Democratic election victories the prevalent mood in the USA remained conservative,
Austria in the European Union

particularly with respect to same-sex partnerships. The voters in the Federal States of Arizona, Florida and California expressed themselves in favour of banning same-sex marriages. In other areas, however, liberal trends were discernible, like in the Federal States of Colorado and South Dakota where voters rejected bills banning the right to abortion.

The months of November and December were marked by the transition to the new administration of President Obama. By the end of the year, the respective candidates for the most important positions had been nominated: Hillary R. Clinton as Secretary of State; Robert Gates, who had been Secretary of Defense under President George W. Bush, remained in office; the retired General James Jones as National Security Advisor; Rahm Emanuel as White House Chief of Staff; Timothy Geithner as Treasury Secretary and Paul Volcker as Chief Economic Advisor.

US foreign and security policy was marked by continuity in 2008, with the war against terrorism remaining a foreign policy paradigm. The strategy of democratisation as the only means to permanently overcome terrorism and religious fanaticism was further pursued. The USA continued its military engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq.

On 17 November, Iraq and the USA signed the U.S.-Iraq Status of Forces Agreement, which provides for the withdrawal of all US combat forces from Iraqi cities by 30 June 2009 and all remaining forces, advisors and trainers by the end of 2011. Both states agreed on a strategic framework agreement defining cooperation in areas like protection of minorities, the rule of law and science.

The United States continued to attach prime importance to transatlantic relations and its relationship with the EU. This was again expressed at the EU-USA Summit in Brdo (Slovenia) in June 2008. This summit was the last one in which President Bush participated. Deliberations focused inter alia on trade issues, the effects of climate change, insecurities in the field of energy supply and a number of foreign policy issues. Both parties agreed that both the EU and the USA were facing urgent challenges which could be managed much better if both world regions worked hand in hand.

On the US financial crisis see Chapter A.I.

8.2. Canada

The Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper emerged strengthened from the federal elections of 14 October, but missed the absolute majority it had striven for. The opposition Liberal Party suffered heavy losses, which eventually led to the replacement of Stéphane Dion by Michael Ignatieff as party head in December. In the new Parliament, the House of Commons, the Conservative Party now holds 143 seats, the Liberal Party 77 seats, the Bloc Québécois 49 seats and the New Democratic Party 37 seats.
In line with the election result, Stephen Harper was mandated with forming a minority government, which was sworn in on 30 October. Disputes between government and opposition on measures aimed at protecting the Canadian economy from the international financial crisis and on issues relating to party funding triggered a government crisis in November. Upon the request of Prime Minister Harper Governor General Michâelle Jean suspended Parliament on 4 December. With this move the Harper government avoided a vote of confidence the opposition had planned against it and the formation of a coalition government composed of the Liberal Party and the New Democratic Party and supported by the Bloc Québécois.

In the foreign policy field, the Harper government continued focussing on a few priority issues. The topics that are currently high on the country’s foreign policy agenda are its relations with the USA, Mexico, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Afghanistan, China and India. Canadian military engagement in Afghanistan will, however, not be continued after 2011. The Harper government confirmed its intention to run for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the period 2011-2012.

Canada and the EU are working at intensifying their long-standing partnership. At the EU-Canada Summit in Québec City on 17 October the elaboration of a framework for a new agreement on an enhanced economic partnership was agreed upon. The actual negotiations on this new agreement are to be launched in the course of the year 2009 and both parties strive to achieve a broad approach going beyond the scope of mere trade issues. On 9 December, the EU and Canada announced that negotiations on the bilateral Air Transport Agreement had been concluded and the agreement’s text initialled. The agreement provides for a comprehensive opening of the market and liberalisation of air transport.

The Canadian economy was also hit by the international financial crisis, though the Canadian banking system withstood the turbulences comparably well. The financial crisis translated into a clear deterioration of the country’s economic data. Against the background of rising unemployment and dwindling economic growth, the Canadian government announced a far-reaching economic stimulus programme for the 2009/2010 budget which will entail the first budget deficit in over ten years.

8.3. The Institutionalised Transatlantic Dialogue

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

The institutionalised dialogue between the EU and the USA is based on the Transatlantic Declaration of 1990, the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA) and the EU-US Joint Action Plan of 1995. At the London EU-US Summit of 18 May 1998, a joint statement on the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) was adopted, identifying a series of elements for an initiative to intensify and extend multilateral and bilateral cooperation and common actions in the field of trade and investment. The institutional framework for the Transatlantic Dialogue was set by the Bonn Declaration of 1999. The highest forum is the annual EU-US Summit. Numerous meetings are also continually held to ensure efficient cooperation: EU-US ministerial meetings, Senior Level Group meetings convening high-ranking officials, EU-US Task Force meetings of Political Directors and the EU-US Working Group as well as expert group meetings.

The EU and the USA are each others’ most important trading partners, which also has immediate positive effects on the respective labour market. For this reason cooperation in the economic segment is one of the partnership’s priorities. Under the Framework for Advancing Transatlantic Economic Integration (FATEI), concluded between the EU and the USA in 2007, the Transatlantic Economic Council (TEC) was set up as a central body for trade and regulatory issues. The main organisational task of the Council, which convenes roughly twice a year, consists of preparing the annual summit. In terms of agenda, the Council’s focus is on both the reduction of technical trade burdens posed by regulations before such burdens even reach the point of WTO dispute settlement as well as the harmonisation of standards. Apart from the so-called horizontal topics, like intellectual property and financial market dialogue, the TEC also deals with so-called sectoral issues including pharmaceuticals, bio fuels and chemicals. If there are controversial issues on the transatlantic agenda, the TEC offers a platform for elaborating pragmatic solutions. A further task of the TEC is the institutionalisation of the various dialogue fora. At the third TEC meeting in Washington, D.C. on 12 December the Progress Report stressing the special importance of a strong transatlantic partnership in times of global financial and economic crisis was adopted.

At the annual EU-USA Summit, held in Brdo (Slovenia) on 10 June, a large number of global and regional challenges were addressed. Its overarching goal was to secure common ground, safeguard all the things the two partners share and have already achieved at an institutional level – including cooperation in regulatory matters concerning transatlantic economic relations – ahead of the forthcoming change in the US administration. Topics addressed in this connection were intensified cooperation in economic and regulatory issues, the reduction of burdens on companies on both sides of the Atlantic and the USA’s intention to revise its Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which enables nationals from the participating countries to travel to the United States without a visa. The First-Stage Air Transport Agreement, signed between the
The European Union’s External Relations

EU and the USA, came into force on 30 March, representing an important step towards establishing a common air services market. Negotiations on a Second-Stage Air transport Agreement, for which the USA has announced that it will fully open its markets (Open Skies), began on 15 May. Furthermore, an agreement on Cooperation in the Regulation of Civil Aviation was signed in Brussels on 30 June.

8.3.2. The Institutionalised EU-Canada Dialogue

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

The EU-Canada Summit held in Québec City on 17 October saw the launching of the process to prepare an enhanced comprehensive economic and trade agreement. The agreement’s content will be defined in an exploratory phase. The actual negotiations are due to start in the course of the year 2009. The constructive nature of the talks on principal issues and the successful conclusion of the negotiations on a bilateral Comprehensive Air Services Agreement underscore both sides’ wish for further advanced agreements. Other topics addressed at the summit were priority issues like energy and the environment as well as peace and security.

8.4. The North American Free Trade Agreement

The agreement on the establishment of a North American Free Trade Area between the USA, Canada and Mexico (NAFTA) entered into force on 1 January 1994. This regional free trade area, which covers transportation of goods, services and capital links two highly developed industrialised countries with an emerging market economy bordering the USA to the South. Between 1993 and 2007, the volume of trade between the NAFTA states more than tripled and in terms of volume rose from 297 billion to 930 billion US dollars.

The NAFTA Agreement contains various conflict settlement mechanisms and the dispute settlement procedures in the fields of unfair trade practices, including subsidies and dumping are among those most frequently applied. In the field of protection of investment the NAFTA Agreement broke new ground as foreign direct investments also receive particular protection under the dispute settlement mechanism of Chapter 11.
9. **Latin America and the Caribbean**

9.1. **Political Developments**

In Latin America and the Caribbean, presidential elections were held in the Dominican Republic and in Paraguay; Haiti and Belize also held parliamentary elections. In Bolivia, referenda took place to confirm support for the President and the prefects of the nine provinces. Municipal elections were held in Brazil, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Almost the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean are committed to democracy, the rule of law, market economy, regional integration and international openness. Although several countries in the region were faced with a number of political crises, solutions to problems were mainly sought by political means and the democratic institutions were not called into question. However, the municipal elections held in Nicaragua gave rise to grave concern as their conduct did not meet international standards.

In **Mexico**, President Felipe Calderón Hinojosa implemented substantial reforms, specifically in the energy sector, during his second year in office. The country was dominated by the extremely negative effects of an increase in drug-related crime and the measures taken to combat it. Both economic and employment growth remained lower than expected. As the economic crisis evolved in the USA, Mexico’s most important trading partner, the country’s economy, which is strongly geared towards the United States was being faced with serious problems. The government tried to counteract this trend by launching an economic stimulus package. Foreign policy, which is marked by a re-establishment of closer ties with Latin America, gained momentum. In this context, the normalisation of Mexico’s relations with Cuba was a key issue. With respect to the country’s relations with the USA, special importance was attributed to cooperation in the safety and security sector under the Merida Initiative.

In **Brazil**, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva maintained his political and economic course focusing tirelessly on efforts aimed at promoting social reforms and economic growth while pursuing budget policy. However, the international economic crisis also forced Brazil to downgrade its growth forecasts for 2009. At foreign policy level, Brazil underlined its regional leadership claim by, *inter alia*, holding a first Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean States in Salvador da Bahia in December. The topics Brazil focused on in this context were its efforts for a permanent seat on the UNSC, increased dynamism of regional integration and the diversification of trade relations.

In **Argentina**, the top issue on the domestic policy agenda was the dispute about the taxation of agricultural exports. The general economic situation was satisfactory and the negative impacts of the financial crisis not yet perceptible. Consumption-oriented measures were launched to cushion the impacts of the weaker economic growth. There was no easing of the substan-
tial tensions with Uruguay caused by the construction of two pulp mills on the Uruguayan side of the Uruguay border river.

In Chile, President Michelle Bachelet put the topics of old age income security, educational system and national security high up on the country’s domestic policy agenda. Further bilateral free trade and association agreements were concluded with trading partners. The country’s accession negotiations with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), launched in 2007, were continued.

In Colombia, the government achieved the most substantial success in years in its fight against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). However, the expansion of Colombia’s military action against the FARC in the neighbouring national territory of Ecuador resulted in serious irritations at diplomatic level in the country’s relations with Ecuador and Venezuela. The liberation of former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt received major media attention. The massive weakening of the FARC translated into slight improvements in the country’s security situation. The re-integration of the more than 48,000 demobilised former paramilitaries continues to remain problematic. However, the issue of compensation for the many civilian victims of the conflict still remains the major challenge facing the country in this context.

In Cuba, the assumption of the position of Head of State by Raúl Castro Ruz did not lead to noteworthy improvements with respect to the observation of human rights, freedom of opinion and the release of political prisoners. As President of the Council of State and of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba, Raul Castro Ruz succeeded in further consolidating his power and legitimising the Communist Party’s retention of power. Several liberalisation measures which were, however, of limited significance for the majority of the population, were adopted and a number of excessive bans lifted. During the second half of the year, three devastating hurricanes caused damage amounting to 10 billion US dollars. In its external relations Cuba placed the emphasis on normalisation and diversification. Following a five year suspension period, the political dialogue between the EU and Cuba was resumed in October. On 13 November, the Rio Group accepted Cuba as a full member.

In Peru, President Alan García Perez continued his economic policies. In the field of domestic policy, the priority goals were fighting poverty and the reform of the educational and health sectors. Peru brought the matter of the definition of the maritime border with Chile before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Peru hosted the Fifth EU-LAC Summit in Lima in May. In November, Lima was the venue of the Twentieth Ministerial Meeting as well as the Sixteenth Economic Leaders’ Meeting of the Asian-Pacific Cooperation Forum (APEC).

In Venezuela, economic growth was satisfactory. The inflation rate, however, increased considerably to over 30 per cent. In the regional elections
the opposition parties achieved some success in the economically important regions and provinces. At foreign policy level, President Hugo Chávez Frías continued to pursue regional cooperation under his leadership. The countries that benefitted particularly from this Venezuelan support were Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba.

In Paraguay, the dispensed Catholic Bishop Fernando Lugo emerged victorious from the presidential elections. His government programme focuses on the fight against poverty and corruption.

In Guatemala, the presidential elections were won by the Social Democrat Álvaro Colom who took office in January. The new President’s government programme focuses on the fight against poverty and measures to improve the security situation.

Guatemala and Belize decided to submit their long-standing border conflict to the ICJ for peaceful conflict settlement.

In Nicaragua, the local elections in November triggered violent riots between the opposition and the government which was accused of massive election fraud. The European Commission, the European Parliament and numerous EU Member States voiced their concern that elections in no way met international standards. EU Member States and the European Commission subsequently suspended the General Budget Support for Nicaragua.

In Bolivia, the Congress revised the draft for a new governmental and social constitutional system including land reform aimed at restricting large-scale land holding, adopted by the Constituent Assembly last year. After having been postponed several times, it will be the subject of a popular referendum at the beginning of 2009. The increasing polarisation of society and radicalisation between the government and the opposition parties led to violent unrest. Each side made successful use of popular referenda to support its respective position. Consequently, referenda on autonomy were held in the country’s economically better-off regions and referenda dealing with the incumbents at the level of head of state, i.e. the President, and the provinces (the prefects) took place on a nationwide basis. With the exception of the prefects for La Paz and Cochabamba, all incumbents were confirmed in office. The overall situation in the country was slightly defused by international mediation efforts. On the foreign policy stage, Bolivia sought to further deepen its ties with Venezuela and Ecuador.

In Ecuador, domestic developments were marked by the project of constitutional amendment pursued by President Rafael Correa Delgado, which will be put to a referendum in 2009. Foreign relations were tainted by what was the most serious bilateral crisis to have occurred with Colombia and which was triggered by the attack the Colombian army launched against a FARC base on Ecuadorian territory in March.
9.2. Relations with the European Union

Relations between the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean are shaped by a summit process involving all 33 states of the Latin American and Caribbean region, and by an institutionalised political dialogue with the Rio Group. Moreover, regular meetings are held with MERCOSUR (Common Market of the South), Central America, the Andean Community (CAN), the Forum of the Caribbean ACP States (CARIFORUM), Mexico and Chile. Negotiations on an Association Agreement were continued with both the Andean Community and with Central America (CA). Efforts aimed at re-launching the negotiations with MERCOSUR, however, failed. The Strategic Partnership between the EU and Brazil, established in 2007, was strengthened and expanded at the Second EU-Brazil Summit in December by the adoption of a Joint Action Plan. October saw the establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the EU and Mexico.

9.2.1. The EU-LAC Process

The EU-LAC summit process defines the strategic direction for the further development of relations. Five such summit meetings have been held since the inception of the process in 1999: at the first summit of the Heads of State and Government of both regions, held in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) on 28 and 29 June 1999, joint principles and a bi-regional action programme were adopted. The second summit in Madrid, from 17 to 18 May 2002, and the third summit in Guadalajara (Mexico), from 28 to 29 May 2004, were dedicated to the deepening of relations in the fields of social cohesion, multilateralism, strengthened cooperation in fighting terrorism and drug trafficking. The fourth summit was held in Vienna from 11 to 13 May 2006 and centred on a further strengthening of the strategic partnership between the two regions. Energy and biodiversity were firmly established as new and important topics for bi-regional cooperation.

The main topics on the agenda of the Fifth EU-LAC Summit, held in Lima from 15 to 16 May 2008, were climate change, energy and energy security, and the enhanced promotion of alternative forms of energy as well as continued efforts to strengthen social cohesion. Further themes addressed were the deepening of the various regional integration processes and intensified bi-regional cooperation in the multilateral sector. After the successful fifth summit, cooperation between both regions will be enhanced and further promoted by way of numerous political and expert-level meetings based on the Final Declaration adopted at the Lima summit.

9.2.2. Relations with Mexico and Chile, MERCOSUR, Central America, CAN and CARIFORUM

The Fourth EU-Mexico Summit and the Third EU-Chile Summit were held in the margins of the EU-LAC Summit in Lima (Peru) on 17 May. At the
former, the EU and Mexico declared their intention to expand their cooperation by forming a strategic partnership which was adopted in October. At the latter, the EU and Chile agreed to intensify mutual cooperation in multilateral fora, particularly in the fields of human rights.

On 17 May, Lima was the venue for a meeting held between the EU and MERCOSUR (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela) at which both sides reiterated their commitment to intensified political, economic and trade cooperation. The negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and MERCOSUR, which had been launched in 1999, had reached a deadlock because of major differences in the two parties’ positions and due to internal tensions within MERCOSUR.

The Third EU-Central America Summit (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua as well as Panama as observer) was another meeting held in the margins of the EU-LAC Summit. Participants confirmed Central America’s efforts directed at enhancing regional economic integration, involving specifically the establishment of a customs union. Negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and Central America, launched in 2007 and focusing on intensified political dialogue, enhanced cooperation and facilitating bi-regional trade and investments were continued during the fifth round of talks held in Guatemala City from 6 to 10 October.

The negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and the Andean Community (CAN) were initially continued with the third round of negotiations taking place in Quito (Ecuador) on 25 April. However, the fourth negotiation round scheduled for July in Brussels had to be adjourned sine die as a result of internal differences between the members of the Andean Community.

The Economic Partnership Agreement, negotiated between the EU and the Forum of the Caribbean ACP States (CARIFORUM) between 2002 and 2007 was signed in Bridgetown (Barbados) on 15 October.

9.3. Regional Integration Fora

The two summits of the MERCOSUR states (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela) focused particularly on open issues in connection with the customs union. On 16 and 17 December, Bahia (Brazil) was the venue of the 36th MERCOSUR Summit and the meeting of the 23 member countries of the Rio Group, the meeting of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), as well as the first Summit of Latin America and the Caribbean Countries on Integration and Development (CALC) in which all 33 states of the region participated.

Under the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Central American states work towards enhanced economic harmonisation.
The presidents of the countries forming the Andean Community (CAN), Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru, convened for a summit in Guayaquil (Ecuador) on 14 October, where they discussed inter alia the continuation of their negotiations with the EU on an Association Agreement.

At the 29th Summit of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), held in Bolans (Antigua and Barbuda) from 1 to 4 July discussions centred particularly on intensified regional cooperation in the fields of tourism, air transport, health, disaster management and consular affairs.

The 38th General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS) was held in Medellín (Colombia) from 1 to 3 June. The central theme of the meeting, which was also marked by the 60th anniversary of the OAS’ foundation, was Youth and Democratic Values. The political topics on the agenda were the Falkland/Malvinas Islands, Bolivia’s access to the sea and the peace process in Colombia. In the margins, a consultation meeting dealing with the crisis between Ecuador and Colombia was held at the foreign ministers’ level.

The 18th Ibero-American Summit was held in San Salvador (El Salvador) from 29 to 31 October and dealt primarily with the topic of youth.

The effects of the international financial crisis on the Latin American and Caribbean region were analysed at all Latin American and Caribbean meetings held in the second half of the year and measures against the economic downturn discussed.

10. Sub-Saharan Africa

10.1. General Developments

While the major hot spots on the African continent, such as Sudan/Chad/Central African Republic, the Horn of Africa and East Congo continued to remain a focus of international attention, the number of countries that registered positive economic developments, like Angola, Ghana, Mozambique and Tanzania, increased. These positive developments were to some extent attributable to the high prices for raw materials and crude oil which, however, meant that the prices for food also increased and consequently triggered economic problems in other countries. Elections were held in Djibouti, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, on the Comoros, in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Zimbabwe.

Austria deployed a contingent of the Austrian Federal Army in Chad. The visit Federal President Heinz Fischer paid to Ethiopia, Mali and the AU was the first such visit to Sub-Saharan Africa.
10.2 Regional Developments

10.2.1. The Horn of Africa and Central Africa

The peace process between Ethiopia and Eritrea, launched by the Algiers Agreement of December 2000, reached a total deadlock. The mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) was terminated effective on 31 July by UN Security Council resolution 1827 (2008) and UNMEE personnel was reduced as of August. The UNSC took note of the virtual demarcation of the border undertaken by the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) and the Commission’s self-dissolution.

Eritrea triggered a further conflict with a neighbouring state in June by occupying Ras Doumera and the Doumeira Island, which had so far been considered part of Djibouti. The dispute dates back to the controversial Mussolini-Laval Agreement of 1935, which neither Italy nor France had ratified. All initiatives launched so far by international organisations like the AU, the League of Arab States, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the chair of which was taken over by Ethiopia in June, and the United Nations had not been able to resolve the conflict.

In Somalia, fighting with the insurgent Islamist militant organisation (Shabaab) gained in intensity in spite of the ceasefire agreement signed by the Somali Transitional Federal Government and the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) because the Shabaab rejected this ceasefire agreement. The Shabaab militia had already exercised control over a number of cities and ports in South and Central Somalia. Initiatives launched by the AL, AU, IGAD, the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the UN to resolve the Somali issue and efforts aimed at forming a new government remained unsuccessful. In December Ethiopia started to withdraw its troops.

By adopting Resolution 1816 (2008) of 2 June the UNSC responded to the growing problem of piracy off the Somali coast (also see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.). Somaliland continued its efforts to secure international recognition as a sovereign state. In October, a number of coordinated bombings shook Hargeisa.

In Sudan, the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of 2005 between the Sudanese government and the Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement proceeded only haltingly. The commission established to demarcate the border of South Sudan commenced its work. With regard to the Abyei border province, progress towards a resolution was made in the negotiations on a common administration and an international arbitration commission on the border demarcation. However, no solution was found to the Darfur conflict, the number of armed clashes on the contrary increased even further. On 14 July the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) applied for issuing an international warrant of arrest against the Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir. By the end of the year, the ICC had not announced its decision.
The relations between Sudan and Chad remained fraught with conflict. At the beginning of the year rebel groups advanced from the border region between both countries to N'Djamena, Chad's capital city. In May, the rebel group Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) succeeded in advancing to the suburbs of the Sudanese capital Khartoum. Mutual accusations regarding the support of rebel groups led to a temporary freezing of diplomatic relations which only normalised after an exchange of ambassadors on 9 November.

On the ESDP operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.

10.2.2. Southern Africa

South Africa continued its various peace efforts and was a non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period from 2007-2008. In May, the country was faced with xenophobic riots. On 25 September, President Thabo Mbeki was recalled from office and Kgalema Motlanthe elected interim president.

In Zimbabwe, presidential elections, elections for both Houses of Parliament and regional as well as local elections were held on 29 March. The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) won the majority in the House of Assembly. As a result of the systematic pressure exercised upon the opposition, the MDC candidate Morgan Tsvangirai, who had only just missed the absolute majority in the first ballot against President Robert Mugabe, did not participate in the controversial run-off ballot in favour of Mugabe on 27 June. On 15 September, an agreement on the formation of a unity government with Mugabe as President and Tsvangirai as Prime Minister was signed but had, however, not yet been implemented by the end of the year. The dramatically deteriorating economic situation and a cholera epidemic that broke out in August causing 35,000 to fall ill and 1,800 to die by the end of the year drove the country to the brink of disaster.

In Botswana President Ian Khama took office on 1 April.

In Swaziland, parliamentary elections were held in September. The new government stepped up pressure on the political opposition and arrested its most important representatives.

10.2.3. The Great Lakes Region

Developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo were marked by the worsening of the crisis caused by ethnic differences and economic conflicts of interest in the Province of North Kivu in the East of the country. A ceasefire agreement concluded in Goma in January between the government and more than 20 rebel groups was not able to be implemented. At the beginning of October, the Tutsi rebel leader Laurent Nkunda declared the Goma agreement terminated and launched military offensives in several parts of North Kivu, which led to a humanitarian crisis involving an additional number of more
than 250,000 displaced persons. Even a special summit between the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the AU, held in Nairobi on 7 November, and mediation efforts by the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy Olusegun Obasanjo and former Tanzanian President Benjamin Mkapa only achieved minor progress.

In **Uganda**, the negotiations between the government and the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) resumed in April 2007, actually led to the conclusion of a total of six agreements; the Final Peace Agreement, however, remained unsigned. Although he had consented to the agreement, the LRA leader, Joseph Kony, against whom a warrant for arrest had been issued by the ICC, did not appear on any of the dates set for signing. After the rebels had launched a new wave of terror acts against the people in the region, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Uganda launched a joint military offensive against the LRA in North Congo without, however, achieving decisive results.

In **Burundi**, the resumed negotiations between the government and the rebel group Forces for National Liberation (Palipehutu-FNL) on 4 December translated into the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement mediated by the Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. This agreement provides *inter alia* for integrating the “new” FNL into the country’s political party landscape and entrusting FNL representatives with government offices.

In **Rwanda**, presidential elections were held from 15 to 18 September, which the EU Election Observation Mission described as largely positive. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) led by President Paul Kagame scored a decisive victory in these elections. Over half of the members of the Rwandese parliament are female.

### 10.2.4. East Africa

In **Kenya**, the controversial presidential elections of 27 December 2007 and the disputed declaration of Mwai Kibaki as winner of the elections, led to protests and violence in large parts of the country which claimed more than 1,000 lives and forced about 350,000 persons to flee. Under a coalition agreement, signed on 28 February, President Kibaki and his political opponent Raila Odinga agreed on sharing political power and launching longer term measures to reform the political system.

On the **Comoros**, the crisis over the island of Anjouan was settled with the toppling of the renegade regional president Mohamed Bacar. During a military intervention launched in March by troops of the Comoros’ Union government involving Sudanese and Tanzanian soldiers as well, which had been authorised by the AU, Bacar fled and was granted political asylum in Benin. The new elections subsequently organised by the transition government were won by Moussa Toybou, the candidate supported by Union President Ahmed Abdallah Sambi.
10.2.5. West Africa

The relations between Austria and Mali were intensified considerably by the working visit Federal President Heinz Fischer paid to the country on 22 and 23 February. Cooperation with Mali became particularly close after two Austrian tourists had been kidnapped in the North of Mali in February by the terrorist group “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb“. Thanks to the assistance and mediation efforts of President Amadou Toumani Touré and Mali’s government it was possible to achieve the release of the two hostages at the end of October.

In the North of both Mali and Niger, the frequency of armed clashes between government troops and Tuaregs increased. While in Mali, the government is in negotiations, mediated by Algiers, with the vast majority of the Tuareg groupings, Niger rejects such negotiations.

In Côte d’Ivoire, the Fourth Supplementary Accord to the Ouagadougou Agreement was concluded in December by President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume upon mediation of President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso in order to create the required conditions for holding the presidential elections that been again postponed in November. However, by the end of the year no concrete date for the elections had been set. On the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) see Chapter E.III.3.14.6.

In Senegal, President Abdoulaye Wade was faced with increasing criticism of his administration. Against the background of major financial bottlenecks the country succeeded in concluding a new agreement with the IMF just before the end of the year.

In Guinea, the bad working conditions led to mutinies among the army and police in May and June. On 23 December, soon after the death of President Lansana Conté, the military junta lead by Captain Moussa Dadis Camara took over power in an bloodless coup d’état. The AU and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) subsequently suspended Guinea’s membership. Both the international community and civil society pressed for the appointment of a civilian transition government and the holding of elections in 2009.

Although the situation in Liberia continued to stabilise, the overall conditions remained fragile. Particular challenges in this context are the re-establishment of the destroyed infrastructure, the development and building-up of new security forces and high youth unemployment rates. After lengthy delays, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission provided for in the Accra Peace Agreement was able to start work. At the beginning of the year, the trial against former President Charles Taylor was resumed by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. On the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) see Chapter E.III.3.14.7.

At the parliamentary elections held in Guinea-Bissau on 16 November, the former unity party “African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape
Austria in the European Union

Verde” (PAIGC) led by Carlos Gomes Jr., succeeded in securing the absolute majority of seats and the office of Prime Minister. The failed attempts at overthrowing President Nuno Vieira in August and November could not be fully clarified. On the ESDP Operation EU SSR Guinea-Bissau see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1., on the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) see Chapter E.III.3.14.9.

Cape Verde saw a comprehensive government reshuffle after the local elections in March, in which the governing “African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde” (PAICV) was defeated by the Christian Conservative opposition.

In Sierra Leone, municipal elections were held in July, which the governing party “All Peoples Congress” (APC) succeeded in winning in the majority of municipalities.

In Mauritania, the military coup of 6 August resulted in the assumption of power by the High Council of State led by the former Chief of Staff General Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz. After the AU and the EU, threatening sanctions, had called for the immediate release of arrested President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdallahil and the immediate restoration of legality and constitutional order, President Abdallahil was released on 21 December and the military junta convened a broad forum of dialogue on the country’s political future on 27 December.

All the states of the region, but Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone in particular, were increasingly faced with the phenomenon of cross-border international crime, especially drug trafficking from Latin America to Europe. In response to this phenomenon, the ECOWAS ministers adopted a Regional Response Action Plan against drug trafficking, drug consumption and the related organised crime at a conference held in Praia (Cape Verde) on 28 and 29 October.

10.3. Relations with the European Union

The implementation of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy and the 2008-2010 Action Plan, adopted at the EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in December 2007, progressed and was evaluated at the Africa-EU Ministerial Troika Meetings held in Brussels on 16 September and in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) on 20 and 21 November, where inter alia the first progress report on the Action Plan was adopted. The expert groups, which were established to prepare proposals for the thematic partnerships foreseen by the Action Plan and also include non-governmental players and members of civil society took up work. Austria’s pro-active involvement in this context focuses particularly on the Energy Partnership and the Peace and Security Partnership.
10.4. Regional Integration Fora

The 10th Summit of the African Union (AU) held in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February was dedicated to the industrial development of Africa. The President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete, was elected Chairman of the African Union for the period of one year and Jean Ping of Gabon to hold the Chair of the African Union Commission. The theme of the 11th AU Summit, held in Sharm-El-Sheikh (Egypt) from 30 June to 1 July, was “Meeting the Development Goals on Water and Sanitation”.

At the joint summit of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), held in Kampala (Uganda) on 22 October, participants decided to establish the African Free Trade Zone which will bring together 26 member states, comprising 58 per cent of the African GDP, 57 per cent of Africa’s population or 527 million people.

The SADC, whose yearly rotating chair was taken over by South Africa, was specifically challenged by the crisis in Zimbabwe. On 8 October, Austria and the SADC signed a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding establishing the framework for future bilateral activities with a particular focus on governance, energy and rail transport. The first working discussions held in this context brought an SADC delegation to Vienna in November.

The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR) convened for a regional interministerial meeting in Nairobi (Kenya) on 20 December. The main topics on the meeting’s agenda were the situation in East Congo and the fight against the LRA.

At the extraordinary summit of the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD), held in Nairobi on 29 October, the Heads of State and Government discussed the political, humanitarian and security situation in Somalia and voiced clear criticism of the country’s transitional government.

11. Asia

11.1. General Developments

Due to their economic and political weight, the Asian states have become indispensable in coping with the global challenges as nations holding international responsibility. In the dialogue with the Asian countries, topics like the financial and economic crisis, the environment, climate change and energy dominate the agenda.

11.1.1. North-East Asia

The primary foreign policy focus pursued by the People’s Republic of China is maintaining and/or re-establishing national unity and safeguarding the process of Chinese modernisation and transformation on an external level.
China has a particular foreign policy interest in maintaining a stable and safe environment in which economic cooperation can flourish. Beijing seeks to strengthen the concept of multipolarity and sees itself as the guarantor of the interests of the Third World. Relations with the USA, Europe, Russia and Japan were intensified.

The Strategic Partnership between the EU and China was established in 2003, but relations suffered a setback when China cancelled the EU-China Summit, scheduled for December, on the grounds that President Nicolas Sarkozy had held a meeting with the Dalai Lama. Moreover, the human rights dialogue was overshadowed by the execution of a death sentence against the Chinese father of two Austrian citizens (see Chapter G.II.1.2.). At the same time, the negotiations on a PCA made further progress. For China, the third largest economic power in the world, the EU is the largest trading partner and investor, and China is, in turn, the European Union’s second largest trading partner behind the USA. The EU’s balance of trade deficit vis-à-vis China has grown, while the overall volume of trade has increased at the same time — a fact, which is generally attributed to the undervalued Chinese renminbi (yuan).

In Taiwan, the landslide victories scored by the Kuomintang in the parliamentary and presidential elections in the first quarter of the year translated into a dynamism unseen in the relations between both sides of the Strait of Taiwan since 1949. This new momentum became particularly visible in the expansion of the economic relations, the postal and transport links and travel facilitations.

The alliance with the USA remains the cornerstone of Japan’s security policy. In this spirit, the development of a common missile defence system was continued. The deployment of Japanese tanker vessels in the Indian Ocean to support the ships of states participating in the pacification of Afghanistan was extended. The deepening of its political relations with China was one of the priorities of Japanese foreign policy. Against this background President Hu Jintao visited Japan in May and the new Japanese Prime Minister Taro Aso paid a visit to China in October.

On the foreign policy stage the activities launched by the Republic of Korea focussed on ensuring security and stability on the Korean Peninsula. When taking office on 25 February, the new President, Lee Myung-bak, declared that he intends to adopt a pragmatic and results-oriented approach in relations with North Korea. He criticised the policy pursued by his predecessor in office as having often been too accommodating towards Pyongyang. Although the new government in Seoul always emphasised its interest in expanding relations and continuing the inner-Korean dialogue, the latter virtually came to a standstill over the year. Since President Lee took office not a single ministerial-level meeting has taken place on the inner-Korean dialogue.
Efforts aimed at defusing the nuclear crisis triggered by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 2006 when the country carried out a first-time nuclear and a subsequent missile test - to which the UNSC had responded by imposing sanctions with China’s approval - were continued. Under the six-party talks between China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA, North Korea submitted a declaration disclosing its nuclear programmes in June, in response to which the USA terminated the enforcement of the “Trading with the Enemy Act”. In October, the USA deleted North Korea from the list of states that provide support to terrorists or terrorist groups. A verification protocol regulating the review modalities for the declaration of disclosure has not yet been negotiated.

For Mongolia, relations with the states in the Asian and Pacific region, like Japan and the USA, as well as with the EU continued to gain in importance. Nevertheless, the country continues to attach priority to maintaining good relations with its neighbours Russia and China. It is to be expected that the exploitation of Mongolia’s potential in terms of mineral raw materials and sources of energy will make the country an important producer of mining products.

11.1.2. Afghanistan

In spite of massive international support, Afghanistan’s state leadership did not succeed in further consolidating its control over the country to a substantial extent. In many regions of the country, governmental institutions are still threatened by Taliban attacks. The joint operation by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan National Army (ANA) could thus not prevent the Taliban from shaking the population’s confidence in the state authorities. Moreover, the fight of ISAF and US armed forces against the Taliban under Operation Enduring Freedom repeatedly claimed civilian victims, which in turn meant that the Afghans’ attitude towards the foreign military units turned largely negative. At foreign policy level, relations with Pakistan have clearly improved since the take-over of the democratic government in Pakistan.

11.1.3. South and South East Asia

Pakistan experienced a remarkable democratisation process. Following the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, the opposition parties, i.e. the Pakistan Peoples’ Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), won a landslide victory in the February parliamentary elections and formed a coalition government. However, as early as May, the PML-N refrained from cooperating within the cabinet, with its ministers resigning. In August, President Perez Musharraf stepped down. In September the PPP Co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari was elected as his successor. The new democratic govern-
ization was faced with substantial economic and social problems, which were only aggravated by the international financial crisis. The major challenge to Pakistan’s stability was the fight against fundamental extremism and terrorism. The tribal areas neighbouring Afghanistan in particular saw intensified fighting between the Taliban and Pakistani security forces and/or army units. The entire country was shaken by suicide attacks, which, for the first time, also seriously hit the capital Islamabad. The Danish embassy in Islamabad was, for instance, one of the targets and another such attack against a hotel claimed 50 lives.

The process of detente between India and Pakistan was severely affected by the terrorist attacks launched by Islamic terrorist groups against Indian targets, and following the attack on the financial metropolis of Mumbai at the end of November, which killed 188 people including 28 foreigners, it has come to a standstill for the time being. India accuses Pakistan of tolerating on Pakistani soil Islamic terrorist organisations like Lashkar-e-Toiba, which is held responsible for the majority of the attacks in India, and of employing it as a foreign policy instrument used to destabilise India.

The strategic rapprochement with the USA and the re-entry into the civilian nuclear trade after 30 years of international boycott were priorities on the Indian foreign policy agenda. Under the French EU Presidency, the Strategic Partnership with the EU was confirmed at the EU-India Summit in Marseille in September. The goal is to enhance its efficiency by setting thematic priorities like climate change, energy and environmental technology, and scientific cooperation. The first rounds of negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with the EU were conducted successfully. As a major regional power in South Asia, India has tried to exercise a stabilising influence on its crisis-stricken neighbours Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

In Bangladesh, parliamentary elections were held on 29 December following a two-year state of emergency during which the caretaker government had consistently cracked down on corruption in the country and implemented election law reforms. The elections were won by the leftist Awami League led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed.

In Bhutan, the first free parliamentary elections were held in March registered a very high turnout of more than 70 per cent. Of the two parties that stood for elections, the Party of Blissful Harmony (DPT), which is loyal to the Crown, won 67 per cent of the votes under their leader, former Prime Minister Jigme Thinley, who became head of the new government. The King of Bhutan’s government programme named “gross national happiness” remained a continuing priority.

As a preliminary highlight of the peace process in Nepal, free democratic elections for the Constituent Assembly were held on 10 April from which the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist), led by the former partisan Prachanda, emerged victorious. Under his civilian name of Pushpa Kamal Dahal,
Prachanda heads a coalition government composed of Maoists, Communists and several Madhesi regional parties. The Nepali Congress led by the former long-standing head of government G.P. Koirala and favoured by India went into opposition. At the first meeting the Constituent Assembly held on 28 May, the 239-year old monarchy was abolished and the republic proclaimed. The Constituent Assembly is charged with elaborating a new constitution within a period of two years.

On 2 January, the government in Sri Lanka terminated the ceasefire agreement concluded with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and launched a military offensive against the LTTE. After heavy combat, the government was confident of victory and strove to conquer the last bastions of the LTTE core region in the North of the country. Numerous civilians who had been locked in the combat zone lost their lives.

In the Maldives, the first free democratic presidential elections in history brought about a change of power in October after 30 years of sole reign by President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom. Opposition leader Mohammed Nasheed became President of State and announced the democratic opening of the Muslim island state.

The situation in Thailand remained instable. The deep divide between the followers of former Prime Minister Thaksin and his opponents remained. The protests by government opponents culminated in their occupation of the seat of government and Bangkok International Airport. These protests also claimed several lives. The domestic situation only calmed down in December after a new government led by the then only opposition party, the Democrat Party, had been elected by Parliament. Relations with Cambodia deteriorated as a result of the conflict around the Temple of Preah Vihear, which is located at the border between both countries and has been the scene of exchange of fire between Thai and Cambodian security forces. In July Thailand took over the chair in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In Myanmar, the domestic policy situation continued to deteriorate. The efforts undertaken by the Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, and the EU Special Envoy for Burma/Myanmar, Piero Fasino, to promote a political solution in talks with the government and neighbouring states, did, however, not lead to significant progress. A large number of political opponents arrested at demonstrations in 2007 were sentenced to long prison terms. Although oil and gas income led to an increase in the country’s GDP, the overall economic situation continued to deteriorate for the majority of the population. In preparation for the holding of elections, scheduled for 2010, the military junta presented a new constitution and submitted it to a popular referendum. According to official figures, this new constitution was adopted with 92.4 per cent of the votes. However, the constitutional referendum did not meet the requirements of a free and fair ballot. In May, the tropical cyclone Nargis caused a natural disaster claiming more than 100,000 lives. Damage was particularly heavy in the
Irrawaddy-Delta and the former capital Yangon. As the military leadership refused international assistance and foreign relief worker access to the country for weeks, aid and assistance provided by the international community could only commence later on.

**Malaysia** held the chair of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) until March and in this capacity made the resolution of the Middle East conflict one of the Organisation’s political priorities. At the early parliamentary elections of 8 March the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) led by Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi lost its two-third majority. The opposition alliance, People’s Alliance, organised by Anwar Ibrahim succeeded in winning 82 seats and took over government in five federal states as well as in the city parliament of Kuala Lumpur.

Since the end of the authoritarian regime of long-term President General Suharto in 1998, democracy has been strengthened and become well-established in **Indonesia**. Particularly in the field of the freedom of the media, the country has developed into a role model for the entire region. Until the end of the year Indonesia was a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. To celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Indonesia launched the “Bali Democracy Forum”, a pan-Asian democracy conference at the foreign ministers’ level as well as an institute for peace and democracy. Since July 2007, a ban on Indonesian airlines flying to Europe imposed by the EU aviation safety committee on grounds of safety deficiencies has put a strain on mutual relations. Since then, there has been no further progress made on the PCA for which negotiations had already been concluded.

In **Timor-Leste**, attempts on the lives of both the president and prime minister were made on 11 February, in which the President and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate José Ramos-Horta was seriously injured and the rebel leader Alfredo Reinado killed. After the President’s recovery and return from Australia, the state of emergency imposed in the aftermath of the attacks was lifted. Together with the national authorities and the international peacekeepers, the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), established in 2006, contributes to further stabilising the security situation in the country (see also Chapter E.III.3.6.).

In the **Philippines**, domestic tensions persisted because of massive allegations of corruption against the government of President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo on the one hand and fears that the government camp intended to extend the President’s term in office by way of a constitutional amendment on the other. The peace process between the government and the Muslim rebels of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) suffered a severe setback in August, when a memorandum of an agreement that had been ready for signing was declared unconstitutional by the Philippine Supreme Court. The agreement had granted the Muslims a large degree of self-determination in
certain regions in Mindanao. A subsequent new outbreak of violence claimed more than 300 lives and internally displaced about 750,000 individuals.

In Vietnam, the state leadership is under the influence of the Communist Party whose political bureau headed by Secretary General Nong Duc Manh defines the country’s political guidelines. Vietnam’s accession to the WTO in January 2007 promoted market-economy-oriented reforms. As a result of the global economic crisis the country’s economic growth, which had been constantly high throughout the past few years, suffered a drastic drop. There are still heavy restrictions on the freedom of the media and numerous journalists and authors of contributions on the Internet (bloggers) were arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. Negotiations on a new PCA and a Free Trade Agreement are ongoing between the EU and Vietnam. From 2008 to 2009 Vietnam is for the first time ever a non-permanent member of the UNSC.

11.2. The EU-Asia Partnership

The 7th ASEM Summit (Asia-Europe Meeting) was held in Beijing on 24 and 25 October and was the first such summit to bring together 43 countries. The dominant topic on the agenda was the global financial crisis on which a joint declaration was adopted. In November, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), an institution established by ASEM and composed of 45 members to promote people-to-people exchange and scientific as well as cultural exchange between Asia and Europe, adopted a Central European-Asian choir project submitted by an Austrian and including Vienna as one of the venues.

Only limited progress was made in the negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement between the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The EU actively contributes to the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the only permanent multilateral institution dealing with security issues in the Asian-Pacific region.

11.3. Regional Organisations

On 15 December, the ten ASEAN member states (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) celebrated the entry into force of the ASEAN Charter, which gives ASEAN a legal personality and enhances the status of the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. In view of the domestic situation in Thailand, the 14th ASEAN Summit chaired by Thailand had to be postponed to February 2009. Due to the close economic relations between many ASEAN member states and China, Japan and the Republic of Korea further levels of integration, such as ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS), have developed in parallel.
On 2 and 3 August, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which is composed of eight member states, convened in Colombo for its 15th Summit, in which the EU participated as Observer.

12. Australia, New Zealand, Oceania

12.1. Australia

Australia’s foreign policy priorities included the fight against terrorism, strengthening of the alliance with the USA and a pro-active multilateral role, particularly under the UN, the intensification of its relations with China and the Asian-Pacific region as well as enhanced relations with neighbouring countries. Alongside the close political dialogue with Japan, Australia also developed closer ties with India. The White Paper on Climate Change stressed the priority role this challenge plays for the new government headed by Kevin Rudd. Australia is highly interested in intensifying its relations and cooperation with the EU. In this spirit, a new EU-Australia Partnership Framework Agreement was signed in Paris on 29 October.

12.2. New Zealand

The new government headed by Prime Minister John Key took office on 19 November. New Zealand’s foreign policy priorities include active multilateralism, climate protection, securing the export market for its mostly agricultural products, liberalisation of world trade under the WTO negotiations (Doha Round) and its relations with the EU. Relations with the USA and the South East and East Asian regions were also intensified. The Free Trade Agreement with China entered into force on 1 October. Moreover, New Zealand continued its committed neighbourhood policy which is striving for stability in the South Pacific.

12.3. Oceania

All Pacific island states belong to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP States). Second to Australia and ahead of New Zealand, the EU is the second largest donor of development assistance with annual donations of over 70 million euros. Under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), strategy papers were signed with 13 states which provide for a total volume of 276 million euros for development cooperation projects to be implemented in the region. In this context the focus is placed on good governance, containing the impacts of sea level rise, sustainable farming, natural resources, energy supply and healthcare projects. Austria strives to intensify its relations with the Pacific states by supporting and participating in programmes. Regional cooperation, particularly under the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), developed positively. The situation in Fiji and the return to democracy
The European Union’s External Relations

was one of the central topics on the agenda of the PIF deliberations. The Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was continued.
B. Austria in Other European Fora

I. European Security Policy

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

1.1. Developments within NATO

The international mission led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan (ISAF) continued to constitute the Alliance’s most important challenge in 2008. At the Bucharest Summit in April, NATO adopted a comprehensive strategy paper for its further commitment in Afghanistan entitled “Strategic Vision”, taking into account civilian and military aspects. Those NATO non-member states which are contributing to ISAF were involved in the preparation of this document.

At that Summit, new invitations for accession to NATO were extended to Albania and Croatia with the aim of accepting these nations officially as new member states in the Alliance during the Strasbourg-Kehl 60th Anniversary NATO Summit celebration in April 2009. An invitation to Macedonia to join NATO failed for the time being because of the unresolved issue concerning the state’s name (see Chapter A.VI.3.1.7.).

In response to the Russian-Georgian conflict, NATO decided at an emergency meeting of its foreign ministers held on 19 August, among other things, to place a temporary freeze on direct contact with Russia at the level of the NATO-Russia Council. NATO provided humanitarian assistance to Georgia and renders specific support with the reconstruction of infrastructure, for instance in the field of airspace control.

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

Deploying around 650 soldiers, Austria provided the largest contingent of any Partner country within the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and, in May 2008, took on the command of the Multi-National Task Force South (MNTF S) under this operation for one year. Furthermore, Austria was represented by one staff officer at ISAF headquarters in Afghanistan.

In Austria, two events were held in the framework the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, emphasising the range of security relevant topics: the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology in cooperation with the NATO Secretariat organised a seminar in October, which was dedicated to the effects of recent developments in the international transport business on logistical aspects of carrying out peacekeeping operations, and in December the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Man-
European Security Policy

Management organised a workshop entitled “Threats to Food and Water Chain Infrastructure”.

Furthermore, Austria continues to make contributions to Trust Fund Projects in connection with the Partnership for Peace (PfP). Austria provided 200,000 euros to a programme for the effective transition of former members of the Kosovo Protection Corps into viable civilian occupations as only part of the corps members are joining the new force to be established in Kosovo. In addition, 20,000 euros were contributed to a project for training programmes to promote the fight against corruption in the defence sector.

2. Debate about Future European Security Architecture

During a speech held in Berlin on 5 June, Russian President Dmitrij Medvedev presented a proposal for a new European security treaty under which negotiations should be initiated at the summit meeting. Subsequently, the Russian plans were specified in that this summit should also be open to the North American nations and security relevant international organisations in the Euro-Atlantic region. In terms of content, the proposals are targeted at new rules on the interpretation of the prohibition of violence in international relations, at the role of alliances and at arms control.

Austria is prepared to discuss this Russian plan, without allowing any room for doubt with regard to the fact that an organisation already exists in the form of the OSCE in the Euro-Atlantic region within which security issues affecting all areas, including economy, democracy and human rights can be dealt with comprehensively. Thus Austria like its EU partners supports a discussion of the Russian proposals in the framework of the OSCE (see Chapter B.II.1).

3. Debate about US Missile Defence Bases in Europe

On 8 July, the USA signed the Agreement with the Czech Republic on establishing a United States ballistic missile defence radar site in the Czech Republic, and on 20 August it signed the Agreement with Poland on the deployment of a US missile defence base. Approval by parliament to these agreements was still to be granted in both the Czech Republic and Poland by the end of the year.

Despite intensive negotiations between the USA and Russia, Russian objections against this project could not be cleared up. The Russian President announced in the autumn that in the event that the US plans would be implemented, he planned to deploy new short-range missiles in the Kaliningrad region, which were capable of reaching the planned missile defence base in Pomerania. Simultaneously, Russia offered the USA the joint use of Russian radar stations. The new US administration under Barack Obama
announced that it would first look into the expected technical efficiency of the planned missile defence shield before taking a concrete decision about its deployment.

From an Austrian point of view, the missile defence project is of relevance for security policy in the whole Euro-Atlantic region and therefore Austria advocates a broad, transparent and objective exchange of views and information among all parties involved directly or indirectly in this matter.

II. Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

1. The Debate on the Future of Security in Europe

In response to President Dmitrij Medvedev’s proposals on the elaboration of a comprehensive legally binding security treaty for Europe and the subsequent international discussions, the Finnish OSCE Chairmanship opened a broad debate on the topic of “the Future of Security in Europe” (see also Chapter B.I.2) at the 16th OSCE Ministerial Council, held in Helsinki on 4 and 5 December. Although participants agreed that the OSCE in principle provided the appropriate forum for the continuation of this debate, there was disagreement on the desired outcome of the debate and the respective format for its continuation within the framework of the OSCE. Greece and Kazakhstan indicated their general readiness to organise high-level follow-up debates on this issue during their respective future OSCE chairmanships.

2. Regional Issues and Field Activities

At the December OSCE Ministerial Council, the Chairmanship brought about the adoption of important decisions including the Ministerial Declaration on the Occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Decision on the Further Strengthening of the Rule of Law in the OSCE Area and the Decision on the Strengthening of the Legal Framework of the OSCE. Although progress largely failed to materialise in the field of regional conflicts, the Chairmanship succeeded in having a Ministerial Statement adopted on Nagorno-Karabakh. This document stressed the constructive and positive momentum in the peace process following the Moscow Declaration which had been signed shortly before.

At the end of the year, the Permanent Council agreed to extend all OSCE missions with the exception of the one in Georgia. In Kosovo the mandate will continue to be automatically extended on a monthly basis unless such extension is objected to by one of the participating states. The OSCE maintains 19 field operations in South Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States including in South Caucasus and Central Asia, to which the major portion of the OSCE budget (roughly 75 per cent) and human resources
are devoted. Austria seconded 34 civilian experts to over half of these field operations, the vast majority of whom were active in South Eastern Europe.

With regard to project funding, Austria gave priority to those countries which had only recently taken the decisive step towards establishing a pluralist democracy with the aim of supporting the consolidation of these developments. This applied primarily to Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine and Georgia, where Austria traditionally engages in border management activities. Projects were focused especially on supporting democratisation, human rights and the rule of law. Moreover, Austria also funded activities involving a politico-military, economic and environmental dimension. Austria facilitated the participation of experts in a number of OSCE conferences and seminars held in the OSCE region.

\[2.1. \textbf{South Eastern Europe}\]

The OSCE maintains its largest field activities in South Eastern Europe, with missions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The two largest missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as in Kosovo were, however, further reduced in terms of both headcount and budget. The mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb was extended until the end of 2009.

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

\[2.2. \textbf{Eastern Europe}\]

\[2.2.1. \textbf{Belarus}\]

The activities of the OSCE Office in Minsk focused on project management in the areas of business and environment, democratic institution building, the rule of law and civil society. As far as of the OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension was concerned, projects promoting the development of the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster were especially supported, whereas activities launched in connection with the human dimension focused on fighting human trafficking.
2.2.2. Moldova/Transnistria

With respect to the conflict over the separatist region Transnistria, Moldova has since the end of 2006 focused its efforts on bilateral talks with Russia. Although the resumption of the talks between Moldova’s President Vladimir Voronin and the “President“ of Transnistria, Igor Smirnov, in April meant that the political dialogue, on hold since 2006, had also been resumed, no substantial progress was discernible in the quest for a solution. The OSCE Ministerial Council held on 4 and 5 December 2008, failed to adopt a regional declaration on the situation in Moldova/Transnistria. The last informal “5+2 format” meeting held in Vienna on 16 December, which brought together the Moldovan government, the Transnistrian administration, the three mediators Russia, Ukraine and OSCE as well as the facilitators EU and USA, ended without results. Members did not set a date for a further follow-up meeting.

2.2.3. Ukraine

The OSCE mission to Ukraine, which consists of an Office of a Project Coordinator, collaborates closely with local authorities and civil society in conducting projects to promote the economy, combat trafficking in human beings, foster democratisation and promote civil society.

2.3. South Caucasus

The OSCE Offices in Yerevan and Baku supported Armenia and Azerbaijan respectively in implementing all aspects of the OSCE obligations in all dimensions, particularly with respect to democratisation (constitutional and electoral reform), the rule of law, good governance, freedom of the media, of assembly and religion as well as support of civil society.

A resolution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is sought under the Minsk Group, which is co-chaired by France, Russia and the USA. A Personal Representative of the OSCE Chair-in-Office is responsible for the technical aspects of conflict settlement and for developing confidence-building measures. Furthermore, the Vienna-based High-Level Planning Group is preparing proposals for the potential formation of a multinational OSCE peacekeeping force.

The co-chairs of the Minsk Group stated that the situation along the ceasefire line was initially starting to deteriorate. The conflict in Georgia, however, served to lessen the parties’ interest in a violent solution to the conflict: although several meetings between the Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan did not lead to a break-through, the two Heads of State signed their first joint declaration in Moscow on 2 November, in which they commit themselves to a peaceful resolution based on the principles of international law and a continuation of the negotiations. It was, however, not possible to adopt a political declaration at the Helsinki OSCE Ministerial Council of 4 and 5 December.
ODIHR deployed an election observation mission to the presidential elections in Armenia on 19 February and to Azerbaijan on 15 October stating that although progress had been made not all international obligations had been implemented.

The OSCE mission to Georgia, the largest OSCE field operation mission outside of South Eastern Europe, is engaged in finding a political solution to the conflicts involving the two separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. As a consequence of the armed Georgian conflict in August, the OSCE Chairmanship together with the EU undertook efforts aimed at a swift conclusion of a ceasefire. On 19 August, the OSCE decided to dispatch further 20 military observers to the zone surrounding South Ossetia, with Austria contributing one officer. In spite of intensive efforts, the OSCE Chairmanship did not succeed in extending the mandate for the OSCE mission beyond 31 December because of Russia’s veto. Russia insisted on the elaboration of a revised mandate taking account of its unilateral recognition of both Abkhazia’s and South Ossetia’s independence. The efforts aimed at maintaining a substantial OSCE presence were, however, continued (see also Chapter A.VI.4.2.).

2.4. Central Asia

The OSCE is one of the most important international players in the countries of Central Asia. The OSCE field missions focus on the one hand on supporting the governments through the provision of expertise related to the strengthening of the rule of law, development of pluralistic social structures, respect for human rights, democratic media policy as well as anti-corruption measures. On the other hand, the OSCE is involved in a large number of training activities.

In Kyrgyzstan, the OSCE Academy in Bishkek, which has been co-funded by Austria from the very beginning, has been offering a master’s programme in political science and numerous training modules for six years. Furthermore, the police training courses organised by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek and co-financed by Austria are proving to be highly successful. The OSCE mission also intends to establish a training centre for customs issues. Although cooperation between the OSCE and the Uzbek authorities remained difficult and very limited, Turkmenistan displayed an enhanced will for cooperation. A clear signal in this direction was the invitation to observe elections extended by the country to ODIHR. In Tajikistan, the OSCE’s activities focus on the systematic development of effective border management structures at the country’s border with Afghanistan. In Kazakhstan, the OSCE’s activities are mainly focused on the country’s forthcoming Chairmanship in 2010. In this context the OSCE is assisting Kazakhstan by launching a large number of activities to support the process of legislative reform and preparing the country for the demanding task of holding the OSCE Chairmanship.
3. The OSCE’s Human Dimension

The human dimension is the core element of the OSCE’s activities which aim to protect and promote human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. The human dimension is one of the organisation’s most essential strengths. Its operational institution is the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

The ODIHR’s scope covers democratic elections, development of democracy, human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination and the rule of law. The Office also organises election observation missions, of which twelve were deployed to participating countries in 2008. The election observation missions not only involved “new democracies” but were also organised in Italy, Spain and the USA. Austria participated by seconding a total of 48 short-term observers and twelve long-term observers to election observation missions in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Macedonia and Montenegro.

One of the ODIHR’s central tasks is monitoring compliance with commitments relating to the entire spectrum of the human dimension. The annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting was held in Warsaw from 29 September to 10 October. The three annual OSCE Human Dimension Supplementary Meetings held in Vienna were each dedicated to a specific topic: the Role of National Institutions against Discrimination in Combating Racism and Xenophobia with a Special Focus on Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Migrants (29 and 30 May), Sustainable Policies for Roma and Sinti Integration (10 and 11 July) and Democratic Lawmaking (6 and 7 November). The Human Dimension Seminar, which is also held annually, dealt with the topic of Constitutional Justice (Warsaw, 14 to 16 May).

The Office also carries out fundamental studies on various human rights aspects, including the situation of human rights defenders, and on request by interested participating states supports them in implementing the recommendations contained in its reports.

The mandates of the Special Representatives for Tolerance and Non-Discrimination Anastasia Crickley (Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of Other Religions), Gert Weisskirchen (Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism) and Ömür Orhun (Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims), in office since 2004, were extended for another year. The Special Representative for Combating Human Trafficking, Eva Biaudet, organised a number of expert conferences in Vienna. In office since 2007, the High Commissioner for National Minorities, Knut Vollebaek, is mandated with identifying and resolving at an early stage ethnic tensions which might endanger peace, stability and good relations between OSCE participating states. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Miklós Haraszti, who took office in 2004, is responsible for monitoring the development of the media in
the member states and for identifying severe infringements of the OSCE’s principles and obligations related to freedom of speech and freedom of the media.

4. The OSCE’s Politico-Military Dimension

The activities of the **Forum for Security Co-operation**, the decision-making body for politico-military issues, were dominated by the after-effects of Russia’s suspension of the Conventional Forces Europe (CFE) Treaty, the NATO enlargement discussion and the Georgia conflict. Numerous proposals on improving the implementation of the 1999 Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures were discussed. Talks also dealt with the US plans for an anti-missile defence shield in Poland and the Czech Republic as well as the Georgia conflict. The Annual Security Review Conference was held in Vienna on 1 and 2 July.

Austria continued its role as coordinator in the debate on improving the implementation of the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security. Further progress was achieved in the implementation of the Document on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) dating from the year 2000 and the OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW, in the context of which increased attention was dedicated to improving safe storage of conventional stockpile ammunition. The topic of Private Military and Security Companies was introduced using the weekly Security Dialogue as a forum and thus contributing to raising awareness of this subject. Upon Austrian co-initiative, a decision on continuing to deal comprehensively with the topic of cyber security was adopted in the Forum for Security Co-operation.

Discussions increasingly focused on the **non-military aspects of security**. Terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings, and money laundering were defined as real new threats and were addressed by a special Security Committee. The Helsinki Ministerial Council took decisions on the OSCE’s engagement in supporting border and customs authorities with a special focus on Central Asia. However, an extension of the relevant activities also within Afghanistan, as desired by individual states, was thwarted mainly by Russia’s resistance. The Helsinki Ministerial Council also adopted a decision to support the United Nations’ Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

5. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension

The OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension was dominated by the topic of “Maritime and Inland Waterways Co-operation in the OSCE Area: Increasing Security and Protecting the Environment”, chosen by the Finnish Chairmanship for the **2008 Economic and Environmental Forum**. As in the previous year, the Forum was divided into two parts, with one meeting being held in Vienna in January and the second in Prague in May. The
priority topic proposed by Greece, holding the Chairmanship in 2009, for the Economic and Environmental Forum is “Migration Management and its Linkages with Economic, Social and Environmental Policies to the Benefit of Stability and Security in the OSCE Region”.

6. The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, with its headquarters in Copenhagen and, since 2002, a liaison office in Vienna, is made up of 320 parliamentarians from the 56 participating states. The 17th Annual Session was held in Astana (Kazakhstan) from 29 June to 3 July. At this meeting João Soares (Portugal) was elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly and Wolfgang Gossruck, Member of the Austrian National Council, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Assembly. The Parliamentary Assembly’s Winter Meeting, which has been held in Vienna every year since 2002, took place on 21 and 22 February.

III. Council of Europe

1. Political Developments

Activities of the Council of Europe concentrated particularly on the implementation of the Warsaw Declaration and the priorities set out in the action plan at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe held in Warsaw in May 2005. The latter focuses the activities of the Council of Europe on its core vocations of democracy, human rights and the rule of law; consolidating its human rights protection system; promoting democracy and good governance; fostering intercultural and inter-faith dialogue; strengthening the security of European citizens and intensifying cooperation among European organisations.

The closing conference of the Council of Europe Campaign to combat violence against women, including domestic violence, took place in Vienna on 30 April where, among others, National Council President Barbara Prammer, the President of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly Lluís Maria de Puig, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer and Transportation Minister Doris Bures delivered statements.

The European Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings came into force on 1 February. One of the strategies of the Council of Europe for preventing trafficking in human beings is close cooperation with other international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The programme “Building a Europe for and with children” introduced at the Warsaw Summit in 2005 seeks to support the promotion of children’s rights and the protection of children from violence. In June, the Council of Europe
initiative against corporal punishment of children was launched. An important part of this programme is the Council of Europe’s new Convention on the Adoption of Children resolved by the Committee of Ministers on 14 May. It complements the Hague Convention on Protection of Children in this area and constitutes a major step forward in that all signatory states will now have a uniform adoption regulation conforming to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR).

The high-level conference organised by the Council of Europe and the Swedish government under the title “Building a Europe for and with Children: towards a strategy for 2009-2011” took place in Stockholm from 8 to 10 September and was attended by representatives from 42 European countries. It addressed the issues of violence against children, child-friendly justice, child participation and the Stockholm Strategy, which lays down future priorities of the Council of Europe’s work for a child-friendly Europe.

At the Council of Europe’s 8th Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth in Kiev on 10 and 11 October on the topic “The future of the Council of Europe youth policy: Agenda 2020”, the necessary priorities in youth policy for the next decade were laid down: actions promoting equal opportunities for boys and girls, fostering intercultural dialogue and strengthening its religious dimension, as well as supporting young people’s access to social rights.

The main themes of the Council of Europe’s Conference of Ministers responsible for Sport held in Athens from 10 to 12 December were ethics and autonomy in sport.

2. Relationship with other International Organisations

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2007 between the Council of Europe and the EU, creating an institutional framework for intensified cooperation in fields of common interest, such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, culture, education and social cohesion. The Memorandum confirmed the role of the Council of Europe as reference for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. The cooperation agreement concluded between the Council of Europe and the EU on 18 June 2008 aims to establish enhanced and, above all, more rapid contact between the Human Rights Commissioner and the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) and grants the Council of Europe a seat on the Agency’s management board. Contact between the Council of Europe and the EU was also intensified in other areas with information on current activities and projects being regularly exchanged between public officials of the Council of Europe Secretariat and the European Commission. The Council of Europe has a permanent office in Brussels. Representatives of the European Commission attend meetings held by the Committee of Ministers, the Ministers’ Deputies and the Rapporteur Groups.
A special priority are the jointly prepared and co-financed programmes for Eastern and Central European countries, which make provision for the promotion of law, rule of law and democracy. There are a total of 54 Joint Programmes, in the organisation and implementation of which there is a marked trend reversal towards projects with an increased involvement of Council of Europe representatives.

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

Regular contact is also maintained between the Council of Europe and the UN. The UN initiative to abolish the death penalty is supported unreservedly by the Council of Europe’s Secretary General Terry Davis. In his speech delivered at the 7th session of the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) held in Geneva from 3 to 28 March, Terry Davis declared himself in favour of an intensified cooperation between the organisations. On 21 February, the Council of Europe, together with UNESCO, held a workshop in Paris on the topic of multilingualism.

The annual trilateral high-level meeting between the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN took place in Strasbourg on 7 July. It was agreed that promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity continued to rank among the priorities of the organisations, and that efforts in the field of election observation and cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE in the fields of combating terrorism, non-discrimination and national minorities should be intensified.

3. Human Rights
See Chapter H.V.

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

The Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly dealt with eleven states, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia and Ukraine, carrying out fact-finding missions on site for this purpose. Another three countries,
Bulgaria, Macedonia and Turkey, are engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue aimed at strengthening their democratic institutions. The Committee further prepares country reports and recommendations on a biennial basis, which are adopted by the plenary of the Parliamentary Assembly.

There are three different types of Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers: monitoring on the basis of the 1994 Declaration on Compliance with Commitments accepted by Member States; thematic monitoring, which has been carried out since 1996, and specific post-accession monitoring (monitoring of new Member States). The latter has dealt with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Serbia and Montenegro. It is a confidential process extending over a longer period of time.

The Secretariat furthermore issues quarterly reports to the Committee of Ministers on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia respectively, and half-yearly reports on Georgia. In the framework of so-called stock-taking, Moldova is also subject to de facto monitoring. In addition, the offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and other outposts outside Strasbourg in Baku, Belgrade, Yerevan, Chisinau, Podgorica, Pristina, Sarajevo and Tbilisi, as well as Tirana and Skopje, report on recent developments in the respective countries on a regular basis.

Monitoring through independent bodies focuses on a multitude of topics. The European Committee for the Prevention 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 prisons. Also, the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established with the goal of prompting legislative reforms at national level through mutual evaluation and peer pressure so that the countries comply with Council of Europe anti-corruption standards. GRECO has 46 member states and may also be joined by non-member states of the Council of Europe.

5. Assistance Programmes

With a budget of approximately 12 million euros, the Council of Europe primarily supports countries of South Eastern Europe and Caucasus as well as Russia in meeting the objectives of the Council of Europe. The wide range of assistance programmes ranges from the promotion of human rights to the implementation of pluralist democracy and the rule of law, to creation of awareness of a common cultural identity in all its diversity, to the consolidation of democratic stability in Europe through the fostering of political, legislative and constitutional law reform, and the search for solutions to problems of European society, such as discrimination of minorities, drugs and organised crime. In addition, the Council of Europe provides more than 3.5 million euros to fund multilateral activities in the core areas of protection of human rights and promotion of democracy.
6. Organs of the Council of Europe

6.1. The Committee of Ministers

The Committee of Ministers is the supreme decision-making body of the Council of Europe, consisting of the Foreign Ministers of the 47 Member States and their deputies (Ministers’ Deputies). The chair rotates on a biannual basis and meetings at ministerial level generally take place once a year. The 118th Session of the Committee of Ministers was held in Strasbourg on 7 May and chaired by Slovakia's Foreign Minister, Ján Kubiš. Austria was represented by State Secretary Hans Winkler. Ministers’ Deputies meet once a week.

6.2. Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly is composed of 318 representatives and 318 substitutes from national parliaments. They have amalgamated into five parliamentary groups: the Socialist Group (SOC), the Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats (EPP/CD), the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), the European Democrat Group (EDG) and the Group of the Unified European Left (UEL). There are 20 members who do not belong to any group. Austria is represented by six representatives and six substitutes, who are appointed by the National Council and the Federal Council (see Annex VII.6.). The Parliamentary Assembly meets four times annually in plenary session and periodically in committees. It issues resolutions, recommendations, opinions and guidelines to the Committee of Ministers, national governments, parliaments and political parties.

6.3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe was founded in 1957 as the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe and established as a consultative body of the Council of Europe in 1994. Its 318 members meet once a year in Strasbourg. The Congress formulates recommendations to the Committee of Ministers in the areas of urban and municipal democracy, environmental protection, disaster protection and social cohesion. These issues are further pursued in Austria by the Association of Towns and Cities and the Association of Municipalities, the Liaison Office of the Federal Provinces and the relevant ministries. The Congress is also responsible for monitoring municipal and regional democracy and compliance with the commitments accepted upon their accession by the Member States. For South Eastern Europe the Congress offers projects for the development and strengthening of democracy at local level within the Stability Pact/RCC. For the southern Mediterranean countries it offers programmes for the further development of local and regional democracy. The Governor of the Federal Province of Tyrol, Herwig van Staa, is the Austrian Head of Delega-
tion and until May was Vice-President of the Congress and Vice-President of the Committee of the Regions. On 27 May, Innsbruck’s Mayor Hilde Zach was elected Vice-President of the Chamber of Local Authorities.

6.4. The Secretary General

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

7. The Council of Europe and Austria

Austria shows a great deal of commitment in the Council of Europe and has already been represented by three Secretaries General, two Presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly and one President of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe. Austria is particularly active in defending the right of individual petition to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in the area of e-democracy, in the reinforcement of Europe’s social dimension and in the further development of the Forum for the Future of Democracy. The Council of Europe employs about twenty Austrians.

Austria’s Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe devoted particular attention to cooperating within the Ago Group (a monitoring group especially established for Armenia and Azerbaijan) and the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). Another focus of the Representation’s activities is to provide interested Austrians with information concerning the objectives and tasks of the Council of Europe.

IV. Central European Initiative

The Central European Initiative (CEI) is primarily aimed at cooperation between its Central, East and South East European Member States with a view to regional stability. Since the EU accession of Bulgaria and Romania, the organisation has been made up of nine EU Member States and nine non-EU Member States. Within the framework of the Initiative, the latter are supported in achieving their aim to move closer to EU standards.

The geopolitical changes the CEI region has undergone since the founding of the Initiative required a repositioning of the CEI in 2007. On 28 November, the CEI Summit of Heads of Government chaired by Moldova in Chisinau focused on stock-taking one year after the introduction of the reform meas-
Austria in Other European Fora

ures. The streamlining of activities and increased cooperation with other regional organisations were stressed as major successes in this context.

The resolution on increasing the budget for project-oriented work by Heads of Government marked a big success under the Moldovan presidency. Austria attached particular importance to the funding of the programme entitled “Know-how Exchange”, which aims to serve the exchange of experience and knowledge between non-EU Member States and EU Member States within the framework of their integration process.

The CEI is engaged in those fields which require cross-border action and represent a particular challenge for the future. This includes a Climate and Environment Fund established on Austria’s initiative.

As of the beginning of the year, the Italian Ambassador Pietro Ercole Ago replaced Ambassador Harald Kreid in his capacity as Director General. As from the beginning of 2009, Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter will assume his duties of Deputy Secretary General.

V. Neighbourhood Policy

1. Regional Partnership

The concept of the Regional Partnership with neighbouring EU Member States – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia and “cultural neighbour” Poland – is a logical continuation of the existing close cooperation in Central Europe. In July, Slovenia took over the rotating informal Presidency from Slovakia and will chair the Partnership for a period of one year until June 2009. Prior to the enlargement of the EU, the Regional Partnership served to reduce potential sources of friction and to support the partner countries in their accession preparations. It was also used as a consultation framework for the EU’s constitutional convention and the Lisbon agenda. Since enlargement, the Regional Partnership has helped to define matters of common interest and to promote them within the EU. It is thus a network that gives relations between EU Member States a more sustainable basis, thereby providing clear benefits both for the partners and for the neighbouring regions in South East and Eastern Europe.

Following initiatives for the future of Kosovo and for the further development of the EU Action Plan for Ukraine in 2004, the partner countries were able to make a durable and concrete contribution to supporting the integration work of the countries of the Western Balkans by establishing the Budapest Process at the Western Balkans Conference, which the Regional Partnership held in Budapest in the autumn of 2005. In addition to continuing work in the six working groups of the Budapest Process, the partner countries also worked on providing specific support for Serbia and the former Yugoslav countries on their road to Europe, as well as on further developing and strengthening
consular cooperation between the representations of the Regional Partnership countries. The latter is based on experiences with intensified integration of national and European efforts in coping with disaster and emergencies. As all the Regional Partners have belonged to the Schengen area since the end of December 2007, this cooperation mechanism also made a contribution towards efficient implementation of European legislation relating to aliens and the preparation of biometric data collection.

Cooperation between the relevant ministries was continued by the successive Presidencies of Slovakia and Slovenia, especially within the framework of the annual meetings of the “Salzburg Forum” of Ministers of the Interior held during the summer. During the meeting in Salzburg in August, the Western Balkans, a new security package for Central and South East European citizens and international cooperation in counter-terrorism were at the centre of the talks.

The Foreign Ministers of the partner countries meet roughly every six months in the country holding the Presidency and at intervals on the margins of meetings of the General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels. The Regional Partnership will continue to look for ways of cooperating in specific areas and on specific occasions with the closely related Visegrád Group. A notable feature of the Partnership is the fact that it continues to manage without any institutional and administrative structures. In addition to meetings at government level, regular meetings of the Presidents of Parliaments of Regional Partnership countries make a contribution to cooperation in the region.

2. Switzerland, Liechtenstein

2.1. Switzerland

Bilateral relations are characterised by a set of tightly-knit treaties and the traditionally frequent exchange of visits. In 2008, the largest joint project of the neighbouring states was carried out: the European Football Championship “UEFA EURO 2008”. It provided an opportunity for worldwide image promotion, laid the foundation for new networks and provided mutual impetus for ideas. This involved intensive bilateral coordination, at political and technical level, especially in the fields of security, transport, sustainability, tourism and location promotion as well as public presentation. Furthermore, a dialogue on energy issues was initiated. The four-year lease agreement for twelve Swiss Air Force F-5E Tiger II interceptors expired at the end of June.

Switzerland’s relations with the EU rest on the two pillars of bilateral agreements and autonomous conformation by Switzerland. On 12 December, Switzerland joined the Schengen area at the country borders. Furthermore, negotiations concerning an electricity agreement, an agriculture and food agreement and participation in various EU projects, such as Galileo, the
Agency for Health, Eurojust, Civilian Crisis Management, ESDP operations, REACH and Emissions Trading were continued or started. A dialogue concerning adaptation of cantonal taxation regimes was initiated.

Switzerland’s foreign policy continues to be concentrated primarily on relations with the EU and large third countries, such as the USA and the BRIC states Brazil, Russia, India and China. Particular weight is traditionally given to foreign trade policy, neutrality and good offices. In the Russian-Georgian conflict political agreement about the representation of one party’s interests in the other country was thus able to be reached. Within the framework of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), Switzerland continued to conduct negotiations on free trade agreements, which were intensified against the backdrop of the temporary non-conclusion of WTO negotiations: free trade agreements with the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and Egypt came into force; with Canada, Columbia, Peru and the GCC such agreements were signed or related negotiations concluded. Further negotiations are being conducted under the EFTA framework with India and Thailand and bilaterally with Japan.

2.2. Liechtenstein

Austria and Liechtenstein are traditionally linked by close and excellent relations in all spheres of public life, which are fostered by a regular exchange of visits. Almost 7,000 individuals commute daily from Austria to Liechtenstein, and more than 2,000 Austrians reside in the Principality.

A member state of the Council of Europe, EEA, EFTA, OSCE, UN and WTO, Liechtenstein orients its foreign policy towards the objectives of preservation of its sovereignty, as much free access as possible to European and non-European markets and the fostering of good relations with its neighbours.

A tax evasion affair triggered a controversy about the financial centre Liechtenstein, which also had an effect on the progress of negotiations with the EC/EU about the conclusion of an anti-fraud agreement. By the end of the year no agreement had been reached concerning the extent of information to be exchanged. The incumbent Head of State of Liechtenstein, Hereditary Prince Alois, and the Head of Government Otmar Hasler took the tax evasion controversy as an occasion to call for a forward-looking strategy for the country to ensure an adequate extent of information exchange, legal certainty, preservation of banking secrecy and to position Liechtenstein as a reliable and recognised financial centre. This forward-looking strategy is expected to be implemented by the new Liechtenstein government formed following the parliamentary elections on 8 February 2009.

Accession to the Schengen area, which was originally sought simultaneously with Switzerland for 2008, was delayed for technical reasons for about one year. As a temporary solution, an Austrian-Swiss-Liechtenstein police liai-
Neighbourhood Policy

son office was set up in Schaanwald/Tisis and video surveillance at border crossing points was increased.

3. South Tyrol

South Tyrol is attributed a special status in Austrian foreign policy, enshrined as Austria’s protective function in the Treaty of Paris (1946). This protective function is expressed in Austria’s ongoing support of the preservation and dynamic development of South Tyrol’s autonomy. The development shows that autonomy may also be understood as a common good for all three linguistic groups living in South Tyrol.

On 26 October, provincial elections were held in South Tyrol. 471 candidates ran on 15 tickets. With 48.1 per cent of the vote, the South Tyrolean People’s Party (SVP) captured the absolute majority of seats at the provincial parliament (18 of 35 seats) despite significant losses in the share of votes (minus 7.5 per cent). Governor Luis Durnwalder took around 100,000 preferential votes. This outcome meant that for the first time in its 60-year history, the popular party SVP dropped below the 50 per cent mark of votes cast. At 14.3 per cent, the Freedom Party was able to triple its vote since the last elections in 2003. Based on the election returns, the seats at the provincial parliament were distributed as follows: 18 South Tyrolean People’s Party; five Freedom Party; three Il Popolo della Libertà Berlusconi; two PD (Partito Democratico); two Verdi Greens Verc; two The South-Tyrolean Freedom Party; two PD for South Tyrol; one Lega Nord South Tyrol; one Unitalia Movimento Iniziativa Sociale. Coalition partner of the SVP is the PD Democratic Party (Partito Democratico), which is represented by two Provincial Councillors. Mauro Minniti (Il Popolo della Libertà Berlusconi) was elected Vice-President of the provincial parliament.

On 18 December, Luis Durnwalder was confirmed for the fifth time in his capacity as Governor. In his government declaration he emphasised the dynamic aspects of autonomy. Where transborder issues such as research and development, labour market, environment, energy and transport are concerned, he stated that the European region of Tyrol was the key partner. The cooperation between Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trento in preparing the programme for the Andreas Hofer commemorative year 2009 is another example of the vitality of the European region of Tyrol.

On 28 and 29 April, the members of the National Council’s subcommittee on South Tyrol, headed by its chairman, National Council Representative Hermann Gahr, paid an official visit to Bolzano.

The EU Commissioner for Transport Antonio Tajani visited South Tyrol and North Tyrol in connection with the Alpine transit project Brenner Base Tunnel on 2 and 3 October.
The OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek presented his recommendations concerning national minorities in inter-state relationships at the European Academy Bolzano (EURAC) on 2 and 3 October. Austria was represented at this conference by the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs Johannes Kyrle.

Since 1952, an exchange of notes between Austria and Italy has been the basis for mutual recognition of academic degrees and titles. This is of great importance for degrees and titles earned by South Tyroleans in Austria. In 2007, it was agreed that an additional 20 bachelor's programme degrees and 52 master's programme degrees should be recognised. The exchange of notes will come into force on 1 January 2009.

4. Nuclear Safety

The Austrian Federal Government, as was laid down in the Government Programme for the 24th Legislative Period, objects to the use of nuclear power as an energy source as such use cannot be brought into line with the principles of sustainable development, nor does it constitute a cost-efficient and future-compatible option in the fight against climate change. In line with international and European law, Austria respects the national sovereignty of other states with regard to the choice of sources of energy.

Austria is entitled and obliged to speak up where legitimate protection requirements of the Austrian population or the protection of the environment are affected. Accordingly the Federal Government reserves all legal options to safeguard Austrian security interests with regard to nuclear facilities which have or might have negative effects on Austria. This position is known to our neighbours. In connection with the planned completion of blocks 3 and 4 of the Mochovce Nuclear Power Plant in Slovakia, the Austrian Federal Government emphasised the necessity of a cross-border environmental impact assessment (EIA). Ultimately, the respective Slovak authorities in charge arrived at the conclusion that an operating permit for the new blocks would be subject to an environmental impact assessment process.

The Austrian-Czech parliamentary Temelín Commission formally completed its work on 9 June and the results were submitted to the governments of both countries. The evaluation of the results showed that the Commission has made significant progress, even though important issues have remained open and still need to be clarified with vigour. The Commission came to the conclusion that these issues should be further dealt with in the framework of the Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement, and that there was no further need to address the topics mentioned in Annex I of the Brussels Agreement at the parliamentary-political level. On 1 July, a Protocol amending the Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement came into force, which provides, inter alia, for increased reporting requirements and an enhanced cooperation.
Neighbourhood Policy

in emergency management. Concerning the planned expansion of Temelín Nuclear Power Plant, a cross-border EIA process was started.

To ensure the safety of the Austrian population, **bilateral nuclear expert meetings** are held annually for the timely exchange of information and experience on the safety of nuclear power plants, radiation protection and cross-border consequences of radiological dangers and their effects. In 2008, expert meetings in the framework of the nuclear information agreements took place with the Czech Republic, Belarus, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

5. **Alpine Convention**

Within the framework of the Standing Committee, which is the executive body of the Alpine Convention, set up at public official level, priority was given to the preparation of a **Climate Action Plan**, which shall contain concrete recommendations for action specific to the Alps and longer-term initiatives, including a time schedule. Furthermore, the main thematic focus on sustainable tourism selected under the French Presidency was further extended.

Due to the efforts by the Alpine states concerning the **ratification of the Transport Protocol**, the European Commission proposed to the Council that this Protocol be concluded as soon as possible.

In a meeting of the Compliance Committee, the report to be submitted to Ministers on the implementation of obligations undertaken by the states parties to the Protocol, including the resultant recommendations was adopted and future procedures agreed upon.

Furthermore, work was done on the second part of a comprehensive report regarding the state of the Alps on the topic **“Water Management in the Alpine Region”**. Supported by Italy and Slovenia, Austria assumed the initiative for implementation of the Declaration **“Population and Culture”**.

6. **Cooperation in the Danube Region and the Black Sea Region**

6.1. **Danube Cooperation Process**

The Danube constitutes a link between Austria and the Black Sea region in a number of ways. The Danube and Black Sea area is an important foreign policy region, which can be used politically, economically and culturally.

In the framework of the Danube Cooperation, a foreign policy process of cooperation among the states of the Danube river basin founded in 2002, the Special Co-ordinator of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, Erhard Busek, presented the final version of his reform proposals for better coordination and further strategic development of the process. It sought to provide an
existing forum for Danube cooperation as the coordinating body for each of the subject areas covered by the Danube Cooperation Process (environment, economy, transport/navigation, tourism, culture and regional cooperation).

In June, Austria’s and Romania’s heads of government addressed a joint letter to the President of the European Commission, suggesting that the European Commission assume a stronger role within the development of Danube infrastructure projects. In October, the member of the Commission responsible for regional policy, Danuta Hübner, called for a specific Danube region strategy comparable to the strategy the Commission was developing for the Baltic Sea region.

6.2. Danube River Protection Convention

Since coming into effect in 1998, the Convention on Cooperation for the Protection and Sustainable Use of the River Danube (Danube River Protection Convention) has formed the basis for cooperation regarding transboundary water management in the Danube region. To implement the Convention, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR) was established with a Permanent Secretariat in Vienna. With the accession of Montenegro, the number of member states increased to 15.

The 11th Ordinary Meeting of the ICPDR was held in Vienna on 10 and 11 December and adopted decisions required for the current implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive in the whole Danube river basin. The results of the scientific research cruises performed along the Danube from Regensburg to the Black Sea in 2007 were presented to the public by the ICPDR during the World Water Congress in Vienna in September

“Danube Day” on 29 June was celebrated with a variety of activities in all Danube Riparian States.

6.3. The Black Sea Synergy

The initiative known as the Black Sea Synergy, which was presented by the European Commission on 11 April 2007 within the framework of ENP for cooperation of the EU with the Black Sea region, aims to further develop cooperation both among the states of the Black Sea region and between the Black Sea region and the EU. This added a new regional dimension to ENP. The Black Sea Synergy pursues a pragmatic and project-oriented approach and follows existing programmes and initiatives carried out by the European Union, especially in the fields of governance, movement of persons and security, energy, transport, environmental protection, maritime policy, fishery, trade, research, education, employment, social affairs, science and technology, information society and cultural cooperation.

The first ministerial conference on the Black Sea Synergy took place on 14 February 2008 in Kiev. Participants considered that this Black Sea Synergy
Meeting was the beginning of an intensive regional cooperation endeavour offering new opportunities and increased stability and prosperity to citizens in the wider Black Sea area and the whole of Europe.

6.4. **Black Sea Economic Cooperation**

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) was founded in Istanbul on 25 June 1992. Its member countries are the six Black Sea littoral states Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine, as well as six further nations, Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Moldova and Serbia. Austria has observer status. The BSEC is a **regional economic organisation** having legal personality and promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the Black Sea region.

Main items on the agenda of its **ministerial meetings** were close cooperation with the EU, especially in the fields of energy and transport, cooperation with other regional and international organisations, as well as visa facilitation. The meeting of ministers of energy on 19 April adopted the Declaration on Cooperation with the EU in the field of energy, which marked an important step towards more energy security and diversification of energy sources and transit routes.
C. The Legal and Consular Dimension of Austrian Foreign Policy

I. General Legal and Consular Issues

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

An amendment to the Consular Fees Act ensures that official acts by missions prompted directly by the birth of a child will be exempt from any consular fees that would be otherwise payable as from 1 January 2008. This adjustment was made to bring them into line with fee exemptions granted for such official acts carried out within Austria.

1. Citizens’ Help Desk

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

The growing volume of foreign travel by Austrian citizens is also reflected in the increased use of consular support in cases of sickness or accidents and deaths abroad. In this regard, cases of support for mentally unstable or sick Austrian citizens in a foreign country or their repatriation from abroad rose. All in all, the financial means made available to assist Austrian nationals in emergencies or serious difficulties abroad amounted to 240,000 euros. Not least thanks to the high level of awareness of the travel advice, which serves as an objective source of information for those travelling to foreign countries, the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs www.aussenministerium.at recorded up to 500,000 visits per month. The
assessment of security conditions in particular is updated on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Austrian representations abroad and Austria’s partners within the European Union.

During the Open Days on 12 September and 26 October, the Citizens’ Help Desk presented the **Security and Emergency Card** to the interested public, who were also introduced to the travel information on the website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the possibilities of assistance through the Citizens’ Help Desk and the Austrian representations abroad.

### 2. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management

#### 2.1. The National Dimension

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

During the Georgia conflict in August, the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November, the demonstrations in Thailand in November and December and in many other crises in the world, the rapid and efficient action of the crisis response teams on site as well as the Citizens’ Help Desk hotline provided the best possible support for those affected. The Georgia conflict in particular underlined the importance of close EU cooperation in consular matters. Particular attention was devoted to efforts to secure a solution to the kidnapping case lasting eight months of two Austrian tourists in the north of Mali in February (see also Chapter A.VI.10.2.5.). In all crisis situations which occurred in 2008, close collaboration with other ministries and organisations, such as the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Red Cross and psychosocial services, and the dispatch of joint response teams in emergencies, have proved to be a suitable strategy for providing optimum assistance to affected Austrian citizens.

#### 2.2. The EU Dimension

Building on the measures taken nationally, there was intensified cooperation between affected EU Member States to assist and support citizens of the Union in emergency situations abroad. These efforts had been especially increased during the Austrian Presidency of the EU Council in 2006. Information was exchanged and coordinated between the crisis centres in the capitals, the representations in the countries involved and the national cri-
sis intervention teams on site. Joint information points were set up in airports, refugee centres, hospitals and hotels, joint search teams were formed to locate EU citizens and joint evacuation measures put in place and the authorities of the host countries were contacted after coordination.

3. Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters

Assistance in legal matters was rendered in a total of 2,530 cases, whereby representations may not interfere with pending proceedings, nor are they authorised to represent Austrian citizens as parties in private-law matters.

4. New Treaties


II. Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic

1. Visas

Austrian nationals holding a regular passport are free to enter 105 states (in 2007: 103) without a visa, including all neighbouring states, Canada, Japan, the USA and many other states in Africa, Asia and South America. Citizens of 138 countries (in 2007: 138) need a visa to travel to Austria.

Austrian foreign missions issued a total of 377,836 visas, which was 7.8 per cent less than in the previous year. This decrease is a consequence of the accession to the Schengen area by neighbours Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary on the one hand, and on the other hand the decline in travel starting from mid-year.
Under Slovenian auspices and with the involvement of France, the Netherlands, Austria and Hungary, a Joint Visa Application Centre (for Schengen visas) came into service at the Slovenian Foreign Ministry on 1 May. Through this new form of cooperation, synergies should be exploited as well as possible and above all at posts with low visa numbers. Within the Regional Partnership, further Joint Visa Application Centres (for Schengen visas) were established in Kazakhstan, in Astana under Austrian auspices and under Hungarian auspices in Almaty, as per 1 November. In adopting this form of European cooperation, Austria, Hungary and Slovenia jointly assume a pioneering role in Europe.

Since 2005, Austria and Switzerland have endeavoured to increase cooperation in consular and visa matters. Accommodation of an Austrian consular employee at the Swiss Embassy in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) was prepared and a declaration of intent defining the related necessary operating details was signed by the Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs Johannes Kyrle and the Swiss State Secretary of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Michael Ambühl in Zurich on 13 November. The premises of the Austrian office at the Swiss Embassy in Santo Domingo opened on 9 December.

The Agreements concluded by the European Commission with the Western Balkan countries, Moldova and Ukraine on visa facilitation and readmission came into force on 1 January.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Indonesia on the Abolition of Visas for Holders of Diplomatic and Official-Duty Passports was signed on 9 January and came into force on 26 October.

In the case of Lithuania, an Agreement and the related implementing agreement were negotiated between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on Mutual Representation by the Diplomatic and Consular Missions in Procedures for Issuing Visas.

The recommendations by the Visa Commission were further implemented, for example, by employing measures to increase verification reliability and efficiency in the administration of visas as well as customer friendliness. In February, during a visa workshop organised by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, together with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, and attended by employees from representation offices with the highest numbers of applications, measures were developed to make the system more abuse-proof. A training session on visa practice for heads of offices was held in August. Furthermore, the activities of joint training and audit teams of both ministries at Austrian representations abroad were intensified.

On 23 December, a training agreement was signed between the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Federal Ministry of the Interior with the aim of training duty staff at embassies and consulates gen-
eral on a regular basis in visa, residence, asylum and passport matters and of instructing new employees within the framework of a joint in-depth basic training initiative.

Inspection activity was further increased and joint inspection visits with the Ministry of the Interior were made in particular to countries from which migration pressure is expected.

Far more rigorous than under EU limits, which provide for the retention of granted visa applications for a period of one year, the period required prior to the destruction of visa documents was increased to a standardised five years by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

Working together with the Austrian representations on site, decisive counteraction was taken against visa service advertisements and visa agencies in the respective receiving States.

Close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior on the analysis of the development of visa figures, implementation and ongoing monitoring of joint training in the consular field and evaluation of visa administration at the missions was continued. In addition, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs initiated a joint analysis of the results of Austrian action taken with evaluation teams from Germany and Switzerland. Joint visits with colleagues from Germany and Switzerland were therefore made to the representations at four posts.

The close cooperation with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber within the framework of a round table on the tourist industry and a dialogue forum on visas for business travellers was continued. Following intensive preparation, the establishment of an external call centre was started in December in order to enable even better accessibility for applicants or those inviting them and to facilitate appointment scheduling.

The infrastructure for the issuing of visas was improved in several missions, such as Bucharest, Moscow, New Delhi, New York and Shanghai, and further in Astana on the occasion of the opening of the Joint Visa Application Centre (for Schengen visas) headed by Austria and in Tehran by the relocation to a new office building.

2. **Border Treaties**

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czech Republic on Establishing a Joint Centre at Drasenhofen – Mikulov signed on 6 November 2007 entered into force on 1 January.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czech Republic amending and supplementing the Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czech Republic on Establishing Fixed Points on Tourist Routes signed on 9 Decem-
October 2005, as amended on 29 June 2007, entered into force on 2 February following an exchange of notes.


The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Czech Republic as per Article 2(4) of the Agreement of 17 June 1991 between the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic and the Republic of Austria on Facilitation of Customs Clearance for Rail, Road and Marine Transport was signed on 31 March and entered into force on 1 May.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government, the Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Swiss Federal Council on Construction of Adjacent Customs Clearance Locations was signed on 21 April and entered into force on 1 May.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Slovak Republic on Establishing a Joint Contact Office at Kittsee – Jarovce was signed on 15 May and entered into force on 1 July.

The Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government, the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein on Cooperation within the Joint Border Police Liaison Office in Mauren at the Schaanwald – Feldkirch – Tisis Border Crossing Point was signed on 21 April and entered into force on 1 July.

The Agreement between the Republic of Austria and the Swiss Confederation on the Utilisation of the Inn River and its Tributaries in the Border Region entered into force on 1 August.


III. Social, Labour and Health Policy

Negotiations on the conclusion of agreements on social security with the Republic of Korea and Uruguay, as well as a Second Additional Protocol to the already existing Agreement on Social Security with Australia were completed.
IV. Austrians Abroad

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

As there is no obligation to officially register one’s permanent residence abroad, the figures on Austrian citizens living abroad are often based on estimates. More than 450,000 Austrians are registered at Austrian missions, 350,000 with up-to-date addresses. The majority of Austrians abroad reside in Germany (230,000), Switzerland (40,000), the USA (30,300), the Republic of South Africa (20,000), Australia and the United Kingdom (15,000 each), as well as in Argentina and Brazil (11,000 each).

In spring, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs installed an option for data entry and modification via Internet to simplify the official registration of Austrians abroad at Austrian representations. It is accessible on the website of the Ministry and the missions.

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

1. Organisations representing Austrians Abroad

Links between Austrians living abroad and their home country are maintained mostly through associations of Austrians abroad and other societies in foreign countries. There are more than 400 such associations and societies in nearly 70 countries worldwide, a list of which can be found at www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at.

The Vienna-based Auslandsösterreicher-Weltbund (AÖWB), the World Federation of Austrians Abroad, is an umbrella organisation, interest group and service platform for Austrian associations and individual Austrian citizens abroad. Since 2004, Gustav Chlestil has been the President of the AÖWB, while Irmgard Helperstorfer holds the office of Secretary-General. The AÖWB has a website (www.weltbund.at) and publishes the magazine “ROT WEISS-ROT”. The meeting of Austrians abroad organised every year by the AOWB was held in Salzburg from 4 to 7 September. The AÖWB received a
direct subsidy of 217,000 euros from the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

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

2. Support for Austrian Citizens Abroad

In 1967, the Fund for the Support of Austrian Citizens Abroad was established to assist 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), which came into force on 1 January 2007, increased the group of possible recipients of support. Financed by subsidies from both the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the federal provinces, which contribute 50 per cent each, it provided assistance to 1,148 needy Austrians in 61 countries totalling approximately 600,000 euros. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees appointed by the Federal Government is former Ambassador Georg Hohenberg, while the office of Managing Director is held by Josef Knapp.

In the course of the Christmas Campaign, which the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs organises every year, donations in cash and kind totalling 86,500 euros were provided to 645 needy Austrians in 60 countries.

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

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

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

The voting rights of Austrians abroad have been extended and simplified with effect from 1 July 2007. The voting age has been lowered to 16. It is possible to be elected to the National Council or the European Parliament from the age of 18. Postal voting is possible in Austria and abroad for those who
cannot cast their vote in a polling station on election day. A signed affidavit
is now sufficient instead of a confirmation of the lawfulness of the voting act
by “witnesses”. Austrians abroad can order absentee ballots in advance for a
period of ten years. If their addresses are known to the municipality where
they are registered as voters, they are informed about forthcoming elections
and also when they are about to be deleted from the electoral roll ex officio.

Also, as per 1 July 2007, the Austrian federal provinces were granted the pos-
sibility by Federal Constitutional Law to let Austrians living abroad vote in
elections to the regional parliaments of their former federal province of resi-
dence. In contrast to national elections, plebiscites and referenda however,
Austrians living abroad may vote in regional parliamentary elections only as
long as no more than ten years have passed since the relocation of the main
residence from the respective region to a foreign country. This type of voting
right for Austrians abroad has thus far been implemented by Lower Austria,
Tyrol and Vorarlberg.

Further information on voting rights of Austrians residing abroad and all
forms are available on the website www.wahlinfo.aussenministerium.at.


Austrians abroad are increasingly calling for the option of using modern
information and communication technologies (ICTs) to communicate with
public authorities in Austria. The Federal Ministry for European and Inter-
national Affairs embarked on this course at an early stage by launching the
website www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at in 2002, and offering the Inter-

Together with Austrian scientists, the Ministry investigates and supports
possible ICT applications related to Austrians abroad in the field of com-
munication and civic participation (eParticipation) in democratic processes,
including elections (eVoting). The Council of Europe’s Committee on eDe-
mocracy headed by the Austrian diplomat Thomas Buchsbaum adopted a
draft recommendation for eDemocracy particularily taking into consideration
the interests of citizens residing abroad.
D. Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

I. Introduction

Combating poverty in developing countries, ensuring peace and human security as well as preserving the environment and protecting natural resources are the central objectives of Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe (ADC). Its basic principles are ownership by partner countries of their development agendas, consideration for cultural and social conditions, equality between women and men, the involvement of women in decision-making processes, as well as taking account of the needs of children and people with disabilities.

1. International Background

As a member of the EU, the OECD, the UN and the World Bank Group, Austria participates actively in international development policy within the various bodies. At international level, the course was basically set by the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness in 2005. A first stocktaking took place in Accra (Ghana) in September, and the results were incorporated into an Agenda for Action with clear recommendations.

2. Legal Basis

The Development Cooperation Act (DCA) is the legal basis for a coherent Austrian development policy. It contains a specific package of objectives defining the development policy criteria for the entire Austrian federal administration, coordinated by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs establishes the strategic framework for the activities in the framework of the Austrian Development Cooperation. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) performs the operational tasks associated with ADC.

3. Budget for Development Cooperation

Official development assistance (ODA), according to the preliminary data reported to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), amounted to 1,165 million euros or 0.42% per cent of gross national income in 2008 and thus, as in the past few years, exceeded the EU target of 0.33 per cent. In comparison with other DAC member countries, Austria is thus ranking mid-range. The decrease in total Austrian aid by 14 % as compared to 2007 is attributable to a reduction in debt relief measures. By contrast, the volume of bilateral development cooperation (ADA programmes and projects) increased by approximately 10 million euros in 2008.
4. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a development that meets the needs of today’s generation, without endangering the possibilities of future generations to satisfy their needs and to choose their own lifestyle. Injustice, a growing gap between rich and poor, increasing environmental destruction, disrespect for human rights and war contradict the principles of sustainability. What is decisive is that those affected have a say in the direction of their development. Long-term success is contingent on the strengthening of institutional competences and capacities of the partner countries. Decision-making needs to be decentralised and democratic structures and procedures are to be put in place and promoted. All projects undergo an environmental impact assessment.

5. Policy Coherence for Development

Policy coherence is an essential requirement for an efficient and effective development cooperation. In Austria, this principle is legally enshrined in Section 1(5) of the DCA and taken into account in the Three Year Programme 2008-2010. ADC is equipped with mechanisms that enable coherence topics such as climate change and development, the combination of security and development aspects and the shaping of economic relationships at both EU and global levels to be systematically addressed in a development-sensitive way. These mechanisms include various inter-ministerial working groups, the reviewing of draft bills and the inter-ministerial coordination of regional strategy planning. Moreover, ADC seeks dialogue with interest groups, such as civil society, within the framework of Structured Dialogue. ADC also participates in EU efforts to embed the coherence principle across the Union.

ADC organised a meeting of resident UN organisations and academic institutes, such as the Laxenburg-based International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), in Vienna on 26 and 27 February, aiming to develop a socio-economic regional approach for conflict prevention. During the seminar on “Preventing Conflict – Creating Resilient Societies” held in the context of the Alpbach Forum from 23 to 25 August, a pilot project in the Mano river region (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone) was envisaged.

II. Bilateral Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

1. Bilateral Development Cooperation – South

1.1. Key Region Central America

ADC supports the process of economic and social integration in Central America, particularly through measures aimed at increased participation of
disadvantaged population groups. This includes programmes to improve the framework for small commercial and farming enterprises and to enable marginalised populations to claim their human rights.

In the priority country Nicaragua, ADC’s activities are focused on rural development, the promotion of small enterprises and healthcare. ADC along with Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the World Bank provided Sector Budget Support (funds earmarked for priority areas) for implementation of the country’s national health strategy.

In Guatemala, programmes to foster the traditional institutions and the customary law of the indigenous population as well as bilingual and intercultural education programmes were supported in cooperation with NGOs.

In El Salvador, ADC concentrated its assistance on rural development and small entrepreneurs. Training courses for university-trained specialists in Austria were continued under the North-South Partnership.

Cooperation with partner countries Guatemala and El Salvador will be pursued within the ADC’s regional strategy for Central America in the future.

Cooperation in the Caribbean Region, which is particularly prone to disaster, focused on strengthening capacities, especially of CARICOM, on disaster relief, climate change (renewable energy and environment) and combating illicit drug trafficking. Austria, in cooperation with the Klessheim International Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (ITH), offered training possibilities and grants for skilled personnel in the tourist sector.

1.2. Key Region West Africa

Energy, conflict prevention and local development models were the thematic priorities in West Africa. Preparation work for the setting up of a Regional Energy Agency for which Austria had promised support on the occasion of the Ouagadougou Conference in November 2007 was largely completed.

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May with government representatives of the priority country Burkina Faso, defining the framework for bilateral cooperation for the period 2008-2013. Austria provided support in the areas of rural development, vocational education and training, the promotion of trades and crafts, as well as the establishment of small and micro enterprises. Aligning its activities with national priorities and adapting instruments to combat poverty continued to be a central concern of ADC in this context.

In Senegal, ADC continued to support sustainable rural development within the framework of the country sector programme, concentrating its cooperation efforts on the south of the country. Complementing one another in this context, projects in the fields of agriculture, the promotion of trades and crafts and the protection of the environment were carried out. Furthermore, support for professional associations and cooperation with local NGOs at
municipal level strengthened Senegalese civil society, which also contributed to democratisation and peacekeeping.

The priority country Cape Verde succeeded in improving its macroeconomic stability to the extent that its status as an LDC (least developed country) ended. The country strategy agreed in 2006 took account of this new situation focusing on the central topics of sustainable management of natural resources, decentralisation and regional development on Santiago Island.

1.3. Key Region East Africa

Water supply and sanitation, governance and conflict prevention were the thematic priorities which were further pursued in the framework of cooperation with the governments and/or local authorities of the partner countries, international organisations, NGOs and specialist networks.

In the priority country Ethiopia ADC was engaged in the fields of healthcare, rural development and food security, renewable energy, gender, as well as science and research.

In line with the country’s national Poverty Eradication Action Plan, ADC’s activities in the priority country Uganda concentrated primarily on the sectors water supply and sanitation, governance and conflict prevention, as well as private sector development. Additional efforts included study grants, study programmes and science programmes. In this context, ADC’s efforts were particularly devoted to reconstruction of the northern regions of the country destroyed by civil war.

In Rwanda, ADC concentrated its efforts on the areas of water supply and sanitation and on the process of examination of the genocide.

Priority areas in Kenya were the water sector, collaboration with NGOs in the field of agricultural production, healthcare and empowerment of women as well as research cooperation.

1.4. Key Region Southern Africa

Thematic priorities in Southern Africa (SADC Region) were the sectors governance and democracy as well as infrastructure. The focus was on the promotion of social justice as a prerequisite for sustainable economic growth and on the optimisation of transport and energy services. In October, a cooperation agreement was signed between Austria and the SADC.

The priority country Mozambique is an ADC pilot country for providing General Budget Support (funds for the general governmental budget). In 2007, ADC joined a group of 19 bilateral and multilateral donors and since 2008 financial contributions amounting to 40 per cent of public expenditure have been made. The funds for agriculture under the Sector Budget Support are entirely allocated to the priority province Sofala. ADC’s activities
concentrated on supporting national decentralisation efforts in the municipalities and local authorities, and the civilian population. The measures are to improve the decentral public services, particularly in the fields of agriculture, water and sanitation and basic micro infrastructure. In South Africa ADC’s activities focused on the development of local decentral government administration capacities and the empowerment of the civilian population. The regional focus was on South Africa’s poorest provinces.

In Zimbabwe, projects led by members of local civil society in the development of capabilities in rural districts and measures for food security and increasing household income were supported.

1.5. Key Region Himalaya/Hindu Kush

ADC supports common goals of the region such as sustainable management of pastureland, diversification of income, and the protection of natural resources and energy efficiency under the auspices of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

In the past few years, the priority country Bhutan made considerable progress with respect to the development of its infrastructure, healthcare and education systems. ADC contributed to this successful development through programmes in the fields of energy, tourism, culture and forest ecology. On 15 August, Austria and Bhutan signed a Memorandum of Understanding for future cooperation also in the governance sector.

In Nepal regional programmes and cooperation with civil society were continued. ADC concentrated its cooperation efforts on the sectors of rural development, the promotion of low-impact tourism and the preservation of the Nepalese cultural heritage.

1.6. Palestinian Territories

The doubling of Austrian aid for the Palestinian Territories pledged by Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik during the 2007 donors conference was implemented. ADC’s engagement covered the areas of health, water/sewage, humanitarian aid, capacity building and conflict prevention. Criteria for the implementation of the programmes are compliance with the Palestinian reform and development plan 2008-2010 and consideration for both parts of the Palestinian Territories, Gaza and the West Bank, with emphasis on Jerusalem. ADC programmes were carried out in cooperation with the relevant ministries, the European Commission and other bilateral donors. Simultaneously, humanitarian aid through contributions to multilateral organisations and the support of emergency relief programmes is being continued.
2. Bilateral Development Cooperation with Eastern Europe

2.1. Key Region South Eastern Europe

One important aspect of cooperation with the South Eastern European countries was to support approximation to or integration into European structures. Sectoral and thematic priorities were the private sector and development, education, the environment, water and energy as well as the rule of law and civil society.

In the priority country Albania, ADC mainly supported projects in the areas of water and energy, vocational education and training in tourism and agriculture as well as regional development. ADC made a contribution to reducing migration from the rural areas to cities by offering new employment and income perspectives for the population in isolated areas. The country strategy 2007-2009 is the basis for bilateral cooperation.

In the priority country Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country strategy 2005-2007 was continued, with a special focus on the private sector and development and education. Activities in the field of mine clearance and land register administration, which are aimed at enhancing the investment climate, were also continued. In addition, measures to strengthen the common identity of the entire state of Bosnia and Herzegovina were supported.

In the priority country Macedonia, the continued country strategy 2005-2007 prioritised the fields of environment, water and energy as well as private sector and development. The improvement of infrastructure as a prerequisite for economic development and the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency are measures to reduce poverty and contribute to a sustainable, socially balanced development. The stronger orientation of the programme towards EU integration and capacity building that had been suggested by the mid-term review of the 2007 programme was also taken into account.

Cooperation with the priority country Montenegro was further increased. In the framework of the focus on the private sector and development, regional tourism development in the north-eastern region and in the region around Lake Scutari was promoted. Further measures in the priority area were higher education, vocational training and environmental matters.

In the priority country Serbia, cooperation was defined by the country strategy 2006-2008. ADC focused its activities on the private sector and education. Important projects included integrated regional development in southern Serbia and in Vojvodina, land law reform, water supply and the promotion of higher education.

The basis for cooperation in the priority country Kosovo was the country strategy 2008-2011, in the framework of which, inter alia, the institutional partnership in the field of higher education was continued by ADC together with the Austrian and Kosovar ministries of education. Further actions were funded in the areas of promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises,
Taking account of the advancing process of EU integration, ADC’s engagement in **Croatia** was further reduced.

In addition to the bilateral programmes, ADC will continue to fund comprehensive regional cooperation programmes within the **South East Europe Regional Strategy** in the years to come. In this context, emphasis is placed on long-term peacekeeping and the development of the whole region. The "Balkan Case Challenge", a case study competition combined with a job fair for South East European students, was again held in Vienna.

### 2.2. Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The regional concept for the **Southern Caucasus 2006-2008** took account of the need for regional problem resolution against the backdrop of current events. Actions to strengthen the rule of law and promote civil society are aligned with the EU Neighbourhood Programme approach and designed to contribute to preventing and resolving conflicts in the region.

The expansion of cooperation with **Moldova** was continued with the aim of creating perspectives in rural areas, e.g. through improvement of the water supply and sanitation as well as labour-market oriented vocational training and the support of agricultural vocational schools. The fight against human trafficking, and especially trafficking in women, and the education and reintegration of migrants returning on a voluntary basis were further priorities.

### 3. Themes und Sectors

The primary objective of ADC is to reduce global **poverty** in all its dimensions, to enable the people to develop their capacities and to articulate their political interests, to satisfy basic human needs and to ensure safety, taking into account socio-cultural factors. In this context, emphasis is placed on support and assistance for vulnerable groups in partner countries and disadvantaged regions. This basic goal was further pursued in the international donor fora.

The majority of the poor live in rural areas, where infrastructure and access to basic services and public utilities are scarce and participation in the political decision-making process is lacking. Interventions in the field of **rural development** aim to improve living conditions and opportunities for the rural population and to improve food supply in the partner countries. The strongly increased prices resulted in a food crisis in many countries and the number of hungry rose. Common solutions for a rapid response and the
alignment of sustainable strategies and actions were at the centre of international alignment.

ADC participates in the promotion of decentralisation processes in the partner countries by directly supporting national programmes or supporting these through complementary interventions. Activities centred on building capacity and capabilities of political and administrative management and other parties involved at local level, empowerment of the population to participate in decision-making processes and the best possible use of existing social capital.

In the field of governance, human rights and peacekeeping, work was done on preparing manuals on the respective policy guidelines. Furthermore, events on the themes “Combating Corruption in Development Cooperation” and “Poverty Alleviation through a Human Rights Approach” were organised. In cooperation with the SADC, a conference on “Security and Development” was organised in Johannesburg (South Africa), which was opened by State Secretary Hans Winkler. At programme and project level, contributions to current country programming were elaborated and global and regional initiatives were supported, such as with projects to strengthen African parliaments and projects to support women in peace processes and conflict situations in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). Projects in the framework of current country programmes were continued, e.g. in the areas of judicial reform, strengthening of civil society in conflict prevention and promotion of peace processes.

Equality between women and men and empowerment of disadvantaged women are essential principles of ADC. The ADC gender guidelines were implemented in the country and project programming. ADC conducted in-service training for employees in Austria and at the coordination offices abroad to implement gender mainstreaming (integration of a gender perspective in all policy areas). Particular emphasis was placed on the integration of equality concerns as a cross-sector theme, e.g. with gender budgeting (establishing that public budgets take gender-specific aspects into account). Main themes were “Gender and Conflict” and “Financing of Gender Equality”. Several events in the course of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue were dedicated to the topic “Women’s Rights and Gender Perspectives”. In analogy to other donors, ADC started an “MDG3 Campaign” (3rd Millennium Development Goal: Equality between Women and Men and Empowerment of Women).

In the education sector, the “Education for All” goals formulated at the World Education Forum in Dakar in 2000, together with the Millennium Development Goals, form the international framework of reference. ADC focused on vocational training on the one hand and on the other hand on higher education, science and applied research. In 2008, the higher education strategy was prepared building on the recommendations of the 2007 educational sector evaluation. Furthermore, ADC participated in the formulation of poli-
cies within the EU and the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, support was given to the countries of South Eastern Europe to promote their integration into the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area.

In the activity area of private sector and development, implementation of the three pillars of intervention was continued: improvement of the framework conditions for private sector development, strengthening of the private sector in the partner countries and involvement of Austrian and European business sectors in ADC. ADC is a member of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), a group of donors set up to mobilise private investments in infrastructure in Africa. The PIDG donors with a contribution of 238 million US dollars since 2002 mobilised a volume of 7.7 billion US dollars in private investment in the infrastructure sector in poorer developing countries. For the implementation of the regional Programme of Accounting Reform and Institutional Strengthening “REPARIS” in South Eastern Europe, ADA entered into a strategic cooperation with the World Bank. Business partnerships with domestic enterprises were further intensified. At year end, a total of 37 projects were being carried out with a total assistance volume of 6.5 million euros. Through ADC contributions, total funds amounting to 21.15 million euros were mobilised for development-related actions.

Work was continued on the strengthening of infrastructure, primarily comprising the sectors water and energy. With the establishment of the Austrian Development Bank at the beginning of 2008, new possibilities for cooperation in the infrastructure sector arose.

In the International Year of Sanitation 2008, ADC dedicated its efforts to the sector of water and sanitation, above all in Eastern and South East Europe and Rwanda. In Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia sewerage systems and treatment facilities were completed. In Rwanda, the Fund Model for the Improvement of Water Supply and Sanitation was further developed in cooperation with the government and the European Water Facility. Austria intensified its activities in the “Africa” working group within the EU Water Initiative, which it will co-chair in 2009. The ERA-NET project “Splash” serves to improve the coordination of European research projects in the water sector targeted at development cooperation. The fourth work package headed by Austria was completed successfully. An expert desk for water and sanitation was set up at ADA.

ADC intensified its engagement in the energy sector. Together with Germany and the European Commission, Austria assumed the chair in the establishment of the EU-Africa Energy Partnership. At the Conference on Peace and Security held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) on 12 November 2007, Austria pledged to participate in the funding of the ECOWAS proposal for the establishment of a regional centre for renewable energy. Austria increased its engagement to accommodate the new International Renewable Energy
Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

Agency (IRENA) in Vienna. At project level, the regional energy focus in Central America was expanded to comprise the small island states in the Caribbean. ADC joined the Caribbean Renewable Energy Development Programme (CREDP) under which Austria, jointly with Germany, held the first Caribbean Sustainable Energy Forum (CSEF) in Grenada from 23 to 27 June. In Bhutan, the rural electrification programme was continued.

The preparation of a strategic guide on environment and development was the main focus of work carried out in the environment area. In line with Austrian overall coherence, it will be drafted in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management together with several other Austrian stakeholders. With the integration of environmental issues into the programmes and projects, the main focus was on adaptation to the effects of climate change. Engagement in the fight against desertification was continued particularly within the EU and UN framework.

4. Co-financing

NGOs are important partners of ADC: they cooperate in the implementation of ADC country strategies and are engaged in co-financing. NGO co-financing covers schemes launched on the NGOs’ own initiative and financed by both their own funding as well as funding provided by ADC. The basis for the thematic orientation of NGO co-financing was set forth in an ADC Policy Document on NGO Cooperation.

Eleven Austrian NGOs have framework programme agreements for a total contractual amount of approximately 20 million euros for a duration of three years and have implemented important initiatives in the fields of education, training, rural development and healthcare.

Two Austrian NGOs were funded for the posting of experts and interns under the personnel development cooperation. External evaluation was used to assess the contribution of returning persons to development policy awareness in Austria. Within the framework of individual NGO projects, 13 projects in developing countries in the South as well as eleven projects in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia were approved. Furthermore, ten micro-projects carried out by Austrian NGOs were co-financed. In addition to ongoing projects co-financed by the EU, nine new funding agreements for the next few years were entered into.

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

In preparation for and within the framework of the High-Level Forum in Accra/Ghana, an international multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Civil Society and Aid Effectiveness (dialogue involving representatives of the various
social interest groups and of governments and international organisations) on the topic “Paris Declaration and Civil Society” was conducted, to which ADC also made a financial contribution.

5. Evaluation

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is responsible for selecting the strategic evaluations and their themes while the ADA is in charge of their operational control. Strategic evaluations generally cover specific ADC themes, sectors, instruments or country strategies and do not address individual projects. These strategic evaluations are tendered according to the Austrian federal law on public procurement and are carried out by organisations and companies which are selected on the basis of a technical appraisal of their content-related and methodical concepts and are awarded contracts to perform the evaluation. Evaluations in 2008 centred on the Burkina Faso and Serbia country strategies, personnel cooperation, including the contribution by returnees within the framework of HORIZONT3000 and “Don Bosco - Youth One World” to development education and public relations work in Austria and private sector and development instruments. The government of Uganda was also assisted in preparing an evaluation report on the implementation of the Paris Declaration.

Furthermore, the external evaluation as provided for by the government programme was performed and the Court of Audit was assisted with its auditing of the Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and of the spin-off of the ADA. The DAC, was assisted with its peer review of Austria. Preparations were made for the evaluations of the ADA’s Humanitarian Aid and of Budget Support.

At international level, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the ADA were regularly represented in the respective bodies and networks responsible for evaluation within the EU and within the framework of the DAC, as well as in the group of German speaking evaluation services (DACH), which meanwhile consists of Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. The 2008 DACH meeting was jointly organised by the Ministry and the ADA in Vienna in October.

III. Multilateral Development Cooperation

Development policy efforts by the community of states centred on reviewing the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Review Conference for Development Finance in Doha (Qatar).
1. United Nations

With regard to the UN, the resolutions of the 2005 World Summit form the framework of reference for development policy cooperation. The high-level meeting on HIV/AIDS in New York in mid-June served to review progress achieved in the worldwide fight against the epidemic based on the relevant UN commitments and against the backdrop of implementation of MDG6 (Millennium Development Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases). The African development summit in New York in mid-September evaluated African development policy needs with particular regard to combating and reducing poverty. This was immediately followed by the special summit on the MDGs, which served to prepare a mid-term review and added a further dynamic to the implementation of the goals by 2015. A further meeting took place in New York at the beginning of October on the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action for landlocked development countries.

The 12th Ministerial Conference of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) held in Accra (Ghana) in April centred on issues of globalisation and development and adopted the mandate and work programme of the Accra Agreement for the next four years.

The second UN Conference on Financing for Development, which was held in November and December in Doha, confirmed the basic consensus worked out in Monterrey (Mexico) in 2002 and adopted a final document extended by current problems such as financial crisis, climate change and gender equality.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had approximately 5 billion US dollars at its disposal, which were used according to the Strategic Plan 2008-2011 to further the five strategic goals of the organisation, namely democratisation, poverty reduction, energy and environmental protection, crisis prevention/reconstruction and the campaign against HIV/AIDS. Austria increased its core contribution to UNDP by 200,000 euros as compared to 2007 to a total of 4.8 million euros and supported, inter alia, the Thematic Trust Funds on Democratic Governance, on HIV/AIDS and on Energy. Austria furthermore supported the UN reform process in Albania and Cape Verde. The pilot initiative “working as one” aims to achieve a higher degree of coherence and efficiency in the operational area of the UN development architecture through joint offices.

The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has been vested with the mandate to support structures and democratic development processes at local level, emphasis being placed especially on issues of planning, management and the participation of civil society. By increasing its payment to the core budget and funding a project in Ethiopia, Austria intensified its cooperation with UNCDF.
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is a relatively small and decentralised programme, which supports projects monitoring demographic developments. The organisation plays an important role in the central theme of reproductive health, focusing both on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and on strengthening the role of girls and women. The Austrian contribution to the core budget was increased. Support of the Maternal Health Thematic Trust Fund and funding of the film project “Women on the Frontline” complemented this approach.

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) continued implementation of the Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the year 2006-2009. Austria supported the implementation of the recommendations of the UNICEF study on violence in Tanzania.

From Austria’s perspective, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) plays a central role in achieving equality between women and men. Austria supported its work in Nepal and the Thematic Trust Fund in Support of Actions to Eliminate Violence against Women.

After years of restructuring, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has become one of the most efficient UN organisations under Director-General Kandeh K. Yumkella and is highly esteemed. Austria will be a member of the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC) and of the Industrial Development Board (IDB) until the end of the 13th session of the UNIDO General Conference. Austria’s high level of financial contributions remained unchanged: in addition to its compulsory contribution of 0.86 million euros, various UNIDO programmes such as investment in Africa, youth employment in West Africa and environmental projects were supported by voluntary contributions.

2. European Union

The European Commission is one of the biggest contributors to the UN funds and programmes in the field of development. As a net contributor to the EU budget and through the EEF, Austria makes a contribution of 203 million euros.

The EU was able to speak with one voice at numerous international conferences, such as the 12th UNCTAD conference, the Third High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, the UN High Level Meeting on the MDGs and the International Conference on Financing for Development, thus further developing the EU’s pioneering role in development cooperation. Austria was intensively involved in the preparation of these conferences within the EU, which centred on topics such as women’s equality, food security, access to sustainable renewable energy and climate change.

At the General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting in May, conclusions on the theme “The EU – a global partner for development: Speeding
up progress towards Millennium Development Goals” were adopted. The Council conclusions emphasise that increased common efforts are necessary to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and the EU strongly reaffirms its commitment of 2005 to achieve the collective aid target of 0.56% of GNI for 2010 and of 0.7% of GNI for 2015. The Council conclusions on the MDGs and the EU Action Programme, which defines milestones towards reaching the MDGs, were approved by the European Council in June.

The EU responded to the **massive food crisis** in the developing countries by reallocating 800 million euros and creating a crisis response facility endowed with 1 billion euros for short and medium-term action. During the preparation of the Council conclusions in November, ADC advocated taking long-term structural measures, in addition to short and medium-term action, in order to sustainably improve food security. This includes, for example, clear conditions of land tenure, demand-oriented consultancy services and the support of agro-ecological production.

In November, the Council adopted EU guidelines for participation in the **Conference on Financing for Development**. These emphasise the necessity for mobilising internal resources in the developing countries, the importance of the private sector and trade, as well as increased cooperation for a sustainable debt level in the long term. At the same time the commitments made by the EU in 2005 concerning the increase in ODA were affirmed. Based on this, the EU played a mediating role in the negotiations so that, despite major differences of opinion during the conference, a joint declaration was finally adopted.

By the end of 2007, a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the Caribbean region and Interim EPAs with several other countries and subregions had been concluded. Negotiations on further comprehensive EPAs with ACP countries were therefore an important development policy issue. Both in May and in November, Council conclusions on EPAs were adopted. Because of earlier negotiation results and fundamental concerns on the part of many partner countries, ADC advocated the greatest possible flexibility within WTO regulations, taking special account of poor and marginalised groups and supporting regional integration.

In 2007, implementation of the Joint **EU-Africa Strategy** adopted in 2007 and the joint action plan 2008–2010 was started. The action plan provides for eight thematic partnerships between the EU and Africa. Austria is actively involved in two partnerships: the energy partnership, which Austria co-chairs together with Germany, and the partnership for peace and security.

**Women in armed conflict** is an important issue to Austria. ADC initiated a study which was commissioned by the Slovenian Presidency of the EU Council and published in May. ADC systematically worked towards its implementation.
3. Assignments Completed by Young Austrians

Young Austrian university graduates are given the opportunity to serve on limited duty tours as Junior Professional Officers (JPO) with UN organisations to gain development policy experience. The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs bears the costs of such placements. All in all 20 junior Austrian professionals worked with various UN development policy organisations, such as UNCDF, UNDP, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNICEF. They served within the external representation networks in Albania, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Kosovo, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Uganda as well as in Brussels, at headquarters in New York and Vienna.

The European Commission’s “Junior Experts in Delegation” Training Programme enables qualified university graduates to complete a one to two year duty tour in the External Service Delegations of the European Commission, jointly funded by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the European Commission. Three Austrians worked in delegations of the European Commission to Ethiopia, Mexico and Vietnam.

Both programmes seek to increase capacity in development cooperation and to increase the number of Austrians in international organisations.

IV. Humanitarian Aid, Disaster Relief and International Humanitarian Organisations

1. Austrian Bilateral Humanitarian Aid

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

Bilateral humanitarian aid provided by the ADA comprises humanitarian emergency action and reconstruction and disaster prevention in order to support chronic crisis regions as well as to respond to unforeseeable disasters. These included, inter alia, floods in Moldova, Mozambique and Namibia and aid measures in response to the food crisis in Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Haiti. The funds are provided directly by the ADA either to international organisations or to NGOs. In 2008, the ADA spent 5.88 million euros on bilateral humanitarian aid.

Bilateral humanitarian aid from other Austrian ODA donors, which includes, inter alia, the humanitarian assistance measures coordinated by the Federal Ministry of the Interior in international disaster events, amounted to approximately 4.9 million euros in 2008.
Both public agencies and private relief organisations participated in the international aid operation that was launched at the beginning of 2005 for the regions in the Indian Ocean for countries affected by the tsunami disaster of 26 December 2004. The Council of Ministers meeting of 12 March adopted the final report on tsunami relief by the Austrian Federal Government, including the Report by the Advisory Council pursuant to the Disaster Relief Act 2006. On the part of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, in cooperation with the ADA, 3.9 million euros in subsidies were provided to projects.

At the **Vienna Conference for the Reconstruction of the Refugee Camp Nahr el Bared** in June, Austria pledged 1 million euros especially targeted at improving the situation of women and children. Measures include capacity building through further education, income-earning activities for women (micro loans), childcare, psychological treatment and creation of awareness concerning domestic violence.

In the aftermath of the **earthquake in China**, Austria rendered disaster relief with the logistic support of the Austrian Red Cross in May. The Federal Ministry of the Interior provided tents, mats, kerosene heaters and sanitary packages from its own resources. During the **floods in Bolivia** in January and February, Austria, assisted by the Austrian Red Cross, equipped the affected population with water containers from disaster relief means and provided power generators during the **floods in Romania** in July. During the **flood disaster in Moldova** in July and August, Austria assisted affected families and their children with ADA funds and through UNICEF to enable their continued school attendance and psychosocial support. Moldova also received shallow water boats, sewage pumps, power generators and drinking water treatment plants from disaster relief funds. For **Ukraine**, which had also been affected by the same flood, relief goods were delivered to the local civil protection authorities.

In connection with the floods and destruction of infrastructure caused by the severe **tropical storms Fay, Gustav, Hannah and Ike** in **Haiti** in September, Austria provided water treatment tablets and sand sacks within an international relief effort.

Austria followed the UN’s call for donations for **Myanmar** in the aftermath of **cyclone Nargis** and provided financial aid to the needy population. Furthermore, more than 170,000 euros in direct disaster relief were made available to Myanmar with the logistic support of the Austrian Red Cross and the Federal Fire Fighters Association.

Following the **Georgia conflict** in August, Austria provided 350,000 euros in ADA humanitarian aid to the UNICEF emergency appeal. The funds were to support children affected by war and enable information campaigns on the danger of mines and ammunition. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of the Interior made primary health care available to 10,000 persons for a period
of three months and provided blankets, tents and sleeping bags from relief funds. Back-carrying hoses were made available to fight forest fires caused by hostilities.

Reacting to the current food crisis, Austria made an emergency aid package amounting to approximately 3.8 million euros. In this context, approximately 1 million euros from ADA funds were provided to the four countries most severely affected (Ethiopia, Burkina Faso, Haiti and Namibia).

1.1. Austrian Mine Action Programme

The mine action programme constitutes a substantial contribution to humanitarian aid and development policy. The actions include mine clearance projects in affected areas, socio-economic rehabilitation of mine victims, general information and awareness building concerning mine risks. The ADA entered into new agreements with a main focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Africa.

1.2. Austrian Food Aid

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management is responsible for the implementation of the 1999 International Food Aid Convention. Recipients are selected by recommendation of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in collaboration with the ADA. The central focus is on traditional crisis regions in Africa, the occupied Palestinian territories and regions affected by acute disaster, such as Moldova, Mozambique and Sudan. This assistance is mainly processed through the World Food Programme (WFP), but also through other organisations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNDP.

2. Austrian Multilateral Humanitarian Aid

2.1. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) is responsible for the development of the UN’s humanitarian policies, as well as advocacy of humanitarian issues with other UN departments and international coordination of humanitarian aid and emergency response. In addition to its headquarters in New York and Geneva, OCHA operates a network of 38 field offices and regional support offices. Only 11 per cent of the OCHA’s financial requirements are covered by the regular UN budget, the rest is made up of voluntary payments by member states including Austria.

Austria continued to hold its traditional chairmanship of the Consultative Group of the Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU). Six Austrians from various organisations and agencies attended the UN Civil Military Coop-
eration (UN-CMCoord) training programme. The United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team was assisted with personnel and financial means from the Federal Ministry of the Interior. The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is primarily supported by experts and response teams.

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. Its most comprehensive programmes are currently being implemented in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in South Sudan as well as in Chad and in Darfur. UNHCR is headed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees António Guterres.

Austria supported UNHCR with an untied payment to the core budget and by funding concrete projects in Ethiopia, Algeria, Myanmar and in Uganda. Austria also financed three JPOs.

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

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was active in more than 80 countries and, together with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the national organisations, made an important contribution to alleviating humanitarian distress. Austria supported the ICRC’s operational work in Uganda as well as that of the IFRC and also contributed to the ICRC headquarters budget. Furthermore, Austria provided food aid to Darfur through the ICRC.

2.4. The United Nations World Food Programme

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the UN’s biggest humanitarian organisation. Austria supported the operational work of the WFP in Haiti in connection with the global food crisis.

2.5. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Austria made core payments to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In response to the international emergency appeal by UNRWA, Austria made funds available at the beginning of the year and supported the reconstruction of a health centre. Furthermore, Austria supported employment programmes and the creation of jobs for young people within the framework of the UNRWA summer camp in the Gaza Strip.
2.6. Other Multilateral Aid

Austria contributed a total of 16.99 million euros for humanitarian aid worldwide through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO). The latter’s budget was approximately 760 million euros.

2.7. Central Emergency Response Fund

The reformed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the United Nations, which was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2005, came into operation in March 2006 and constitutes the implementation of a central reform project of the UN in the humanitarian field and a major improvement over the system of flash appeals, which were only provided with funds by member states after a disaster or crisis. It is a standby fund to enable more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to be given to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts (see also Chapter E.II.8.).
E. Global Cooperation – The United Nations

I. Introduction

The Secretary General of the United Nations (UNSG), Ban Ki-moon, identified the global financial, food and energy crises, new conflicts and political tensions as well as the general threat owing to climate change as the great menaces and challenges to be met by the international community. This is why he termed 2008 the “year of multiple crises”.

Within the United Nations (UN) Austria focused its efforts on strengthening the rule of law, protecting human rights, strengthening the ban on cluster munitions, and promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Austria also maintained its efforts to promote more women to leading positions in peace promotion. On 17 October, Austria was elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for the 2009-2010 two-year term.

The EU is the driving force in terms of content as well as the largest financial contributor and donor to international development cooperation, thus playing a special role within the UN.

II. The United Nations General Assembly

1. Procedural Matters

1.1. General Debate and High-Level Meetings on Africa and on the Millennium Development Goals

The General Debate of the 63rd UN General Assembly (UNGA) took place in New York from 23 to 29 September. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, and Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik.

At the invitation of the UNSG, the General Debate was preceded on 22 September by a High-Level Meeting entitled “New Partnership for Africa’s Development: State of Implementation and International Support”, which was attended by Federal President Heinz Fischer. In the course of the meeting, the topic of development cooperation with Africa was comprehensively evaluated and a final document adopted to add new impetus to the commitments made in the UN Millennium Declaration concerning Africa. At the invitation of the UNSG and the President of the UNGA another High-Level Meeting was convened on 25 September, dealing with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which was attended by Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer.

In her statement to the UNGA on 26 September, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik focused on women in particular and underlined that no society could succeed without honouring the contributions made by women, encouraging
The United Nations General Assembly

their inclusion and fully utilising their potential. In this context she proposed to make a comprehensive follow-up on the state of implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, on the occasion of its 10th anniversary in 2010. In addition, she pointed out Austria’s efforts to promote disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. She called for creative and courageous approaches to avoid proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this context, she brought up the Austrian proposals of comprehensively multilateralising the nuclear fuel cycle. Federal Minister Plassnik also referred to the situations in Georgia, the Western Balkans, Zimbabwe, and the Middle East and pinpointed the threats posed by climate change and the food crisis. She stressed Austria’s strong interest in the principle of rule of law, conflict prevention, peace promotion and sustainable development.

During the Ministerial Week, Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, and State Secretary Hans Winkler held a large number of bilateral talks. Federal President Fischer met with the UNSG and held talks with the presidents of Argentina, the Central African Republic, Finland, Iraq, Rwanda, and Slovenia. He also met with the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the foreign ministers of Mali and Somalia. A working lunch on the topic of “water”, hosted by the Federal President, was attended by the President and the Foreign Minister of Mozambique, the foreign ministers of Sierra Leone and São Tomé, and the development ministers of Malawi and Namibia. Federal Chancellor Gusenbauer met with the presidents of the Comoros and the Marshall Islands and the prime ministers of Antigua and Barbuda, St. Lucia, and Tuvalu. Federal Minister Plassnik held talks with the foreign ministers of Iran, Peru, Ruanda, and South Africa. She also met the Secretary-General (SG) of the League of Arab States. On the sidelines of the General Debate, she participated in a meeting of female foreign ministers on the topic of “Women Leaders: Making the Difference” at the invitation of US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. State Secretary Winkler met with the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Belize, Bhutan, the Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Nepal, the Solomon Islands, Uzbekistan, and Zambia, as well as with the SG of CARICOM.

2. Political Affairs

2.1. The Middle East

The EU adopted a common voting policy regarding the UNGA’s 19 annual resolutions on the Middle East, the only exceptions being the resolutions on “the Syrian Golan”, the “Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People”, and on a “Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat”. Unlike the other EU Member States, which abstained from vot-
ing, Malta and Cyprus, which are members of the above committee, continued to vote in favour of the two latter resolutions. Cyprus also voted in favour of the resolution on “the Syrian Golan”, while all other EU Member States abstained. Consensus among all UN member states was again restored on the resolution on “Assistance to the Palestinian Population”, sponsored by the EU. It was thus the only resolution on the Middle East adopted by consensus. The follow-up resolution to last year’s resolution of the same name on “the Lebanese Oil Spill”, sponsored by Lebanon, was also supported by the EU.

2.2. Disarmament and International Security

In October, the UNSG presented a Five-Point Plan on Nuclear Disarmament, thus providing significant impetus to stepping-up measures for disarmament, in particular in the field of nuclear weapons.

Deliberations in the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) were characterised by expecting a change in the positioning of the USA after the November presidential elections. A core group of states, among them Austria, initiated the adoption of a resolution on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, entrusting the UNSG to act as the depositary of this Convention. On the initiative of Australia and the Republic of Korea, another resolution on combating illicit arms brokering was adopted. A resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty set forth the agenda of a working group to draft the contents of a future Arms Trade Treaty. The EU initiated the adoption of a resolution on The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation thus strengthening Austria’s role as immediate contact point of this instrument. Through their High Representative for Disarmament, Sergio Duarte, the UN for the first time showed interest in a Vienna-based UN liaison office for disarmament. This would further upgrade the UN headquarters in Vienna as a competence centre for international security and improve the networking between the institutions in Vienna and New York as to the disarmament discourse. Austria issued declarations on banning cluster munitions, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle, promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, The Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, and on strengthening the IAEA security and control systems.

The 3rd Biennial Meeting of States on the Implementation of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in July adopted an outcome document which represents the first substantial success since the foundation of the UN Program of Action (2001). Iran prevented the adoption by consensus of the final document. Austria highlighted its commitment concerning the control of small arms and light weapons, in particular in Africa.

On the initiative and under the thematic leadership of Austria as the co-chair of the Conference to promote the entry into force of the CTBT, a Ministerial Meeting on the CTBT took place in New York in September in which the
UNSG took part for the first time. The Ministerial Declaration adopted was supported by 96 states, reflecting the positive trend in the ratification process.

2.3. The United Nations Disarmament Commission

In April, the UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC) concluded its three-year cycle without any substantial results. Differences in opinion between the two working groups on “nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation” and “confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons” proved insurmountable. Despite these sobering results, UNDC was confirmed as the only universal consultative body for disarmament affairs.

3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs

The Second Committee (Economic and Financial Affairs) focused on preparing the UN Follow-Up International Conference on Financing for Development in Doha (Qatar) from 29 November to 2 December. The Conference adopted a final document in which the international community reaffirms its pledges to increase funds for development cooperation. In addition, it was underlined that innovative financing instruments have become increasingly important, closer cooperation in tax matters was recommended, a positive reference was made to the Accra Agenda for Action to Implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and gender equality was recognised as a human right, a basic value and part of social justice.

The Second Committee’s considerations on environment and sustainability focused on the challenges posed by climate change and the forthcoming negotiations on a comprehensive climate protection regime for the period after 2012. Despite the great attention devoted to this topic it was extremely difficult to reach agreement on the significance of the consequences of global warming for accomplishing the MDGs and on the urgency of binding counter-strategies in the negotiations on resolutions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, reduction of disasters, desertification, and renewable energy. The respective resolutions were, however, adopted by consensus.

4. Human Rights

See Chapter G.III.

5. Drug Control and Crime Prevention

See Chapters H.II., and H.III.
6. Social Policy
The topics of the 46th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD) that took place in New York from 6 to 15 February were full employment and decent work, mainstreaming of disabilities in strategies for development, and reviewing the implementation of action programmes for social groups. The CSocD adopted resolutions on full employment and decent work, on reviewing the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, on the social dimension of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), on the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Disability, on mainstreaming disabilities in the development agenda, and on the working methods of the Commission. All resolutions on social issues, dealt with by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural) were adopted by consensus by the Plenary of the UNGA.

7. International Women’s Affairs

8. Humanitarian Affairs
The UN member states made voluntary contributions of 452.5 million US dollars to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). Hence, the Fund achieved its annual financing target of 450 million US dollars for ensuring the immediate provision of funds for relief measures in the event of humanitarian crises. The High-Level CERF Donor Conference on 4 December received pledges for 2009 donations amounting to 380 million US dollars, which was a less successful result than that of the previous year’s Conference, owing to the global economic situation and the unfavourable Euro – US dollar exchange rate. For details on the Austrian contributions please refer to Chapter D.IV.2.7.

All humanitarian plenary resolutions were adopted by consensus. It was decided to designate 19 August World Humanitarian Day. The EU was the main sponsor and facilitator of draft resolutions concerning the Safety and Security of Humanitarian Personnel and Assistance to the Palestinian People. Four of the seven plenary resolutions were co-sponsored by Austria.

9. Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
The 51st session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COP-UOS) took place in Vienna from June 11 to 20. Following-up on the priorities defined, the session focused on using space technologies in other areas and the relevance of their application for sustainable development, including food security and water management, as well as access to clean drinking
water. Austria welcomed the continuation of the work of the UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER), a program of the Vienna-based Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSA). Austria financed UN-SPIDER workshops in Barbados and Fiji, particularly for experts from developing countries. The Austrian city of Graz hosted a Symposium on Space Tools and Solutions for Monitoring the Atmosphere and Land Cover for sustainable development.

10. Administrative and Budgetary Affairs

The deliberations in the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Affairs) focused on measures for continuing the implementation of the Management Reform adopted at the 2005 World Summit. Significant progress was achieved in the area of human resources reform. In this context, UN employment contracts were standardised and conditions of service for UN field staff were harmonised. In addition, the UNGA finalised the reform of the Internal Justice System by adopting the statutes of the new tribunals. The UNGA also agreed on implementing a new information technology strategy. On the subject of institutional reform, the UNGA agreed to strengthen the UN’s global development architecture as well as its structures for preventative diplomacy. In this context it was also decided to strengthen the Office of the Rule of Law.

The UNGA approved 657.5 million US dollars in additional funds for the regular UN budget for the period 2008-2009, thus increasing the total amount to 4.865 billion US dollars. The majority of the increase in costs related to the financing of the 27 political missions in 2009 and to adjustments due to inflation and exchange rate fluctuations.

At 7.04 billion US dollars, the annual budget approved for peacekeeping operations for the period from July 2008 to June 2009 was slightly higher than the previous year’s budget. To improve the planning of and support for operations, the UNGA voted for strengthening the Office of Military Affairs (OMA) in its Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). In addition and in following the recommendations made by the review conference for Contingent-Owned Equipment (COE), the UNGA also updated reimbursement rates and adapted the refunding system.

11. International Law

The work of the Sixth Committee (Legal) focused on the annual International Law Week, the legal consequences of the reform of the UN Internal Justice System, and on the issues of rule of law, terrorism, and the criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission. The Sixth Committee also dealt with the reports of the UN Commission on International Trade Law
(UNCITRAL), whose resolutions are coordinated by Austria, and those of the Charter and Host Country Committees. On 4 and 5 September, the UNGA held its first formal meeting to review the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

11.1. International Law Week

The International Law Week, which is based on an Austrian proposal, was held from 27 to 31 October and brought together legal advisers to discuss international law issues in the Sixth Committee. The meeting focused on discussing the report of the International Law Commission, which dealt with a number of current international law issues such as the accountability of international organisations, effects of armed conflicts on treaties, reservations to treaties, expulsion, the obligation to extradite or prosecute, and shared natural resources. The Austrian-Swedish initiative to revive the Sixth Committee organised another interactive dialogue meeting with special rapporteurs of the International Law Commission.

11.2. Reform of the System of Administration of Justice at the UN

Negotiations centred on legal issues of the statutes for the tribunals of the new System of Administration of Justice. Austria’s calls for safeguarding the rule of law principles were firmly enshrined therein: right to effective legal protection, right to equal access for all UN staff, and the so-called two-tier approach concerning employment issues. Deliberations on financial aspects were concluded by the Fifth Committee.

11.3. Rule of Law

The deliberations on the agenda item “The rule of law at the national and international levels” were based on the inventory of all rule-of-law activities within the UN-system compiled by the UN Secretariat and on the report by the Rule of Law Unit, which focuses on strengthening and coordinating these activities. Based on an Austrian initiative, the UNGA, in its resolution 63/119, called for dealing with the financial report on supporting the Unit without delay. The topic to be discussed by the 64th UNGA will be called “strengthening the rule of law on international level” and will, as proposed by Austria, deal with the issue of strengthening a rules-based international system. Alongside the annual report of the UNGA, the final report “The UN Security Council and the Rule of Law”, compiled by Austria and presented in April will represent an important basis for discussion. The final report was translated into all UN official languages and circulated as a UN document.
11.4. Terrorism

See Chapter H.III.

11.5 Further Issues

There is still no agreement concerning the drafting of a convention on criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission. UNGA resolution 63/119 was adopted as a short-term measure by which the states were again requested to substantiate jurisdiction over crimes of serious nature committed by their nationals in their capacity as UN officials or experts on mission.

In addition, the UNGA also adopted resolutions on the reports of the Charter and Host Country Committees, the protection of diplomatic and consular missions, and on the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Convention. The presidents of the ICJ, the International Criminal Court, and the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) presented their annual reports to the UNGA; the annual resolution on the Law of the Sea and Fisheries was adopted.

III. The United Nations Security Council

1. Introduction

Apart from its five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, the UN Security Council (UNSC) also included the non-permanent members Belgium, Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Indonesia, Italy, Libya, Panama, South Africa, and Vietnam. As the terms of Belgium, Italy, Indonesia, South Africa and Panama drew to a close at the end of the year, the 63rd UNGA elected Austria, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, and Uganda. After 1973-74 and 1991-92, this is Austria’s third membership in the UNSC.

At the initiative of Burkina Faso, the UNSC discussed the role played by third-party-mediation in the peaceful resolution of conflicts in a thematic debate on “Mediation and Settlement of Disputes” held on 23 September. Chaired by Costa Rica, the UNSC discussed the necessity of reducing military expenditure in favour of development assistance in a thematic debate on “Strengthening Collective Security Through General Regulation and Reduction of Armaments” held on 19 November. Austria participated in the debates on small arms and light weapons, on the protection of civilians in conflicts, the protection of children in conflicts, and on the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1325 (2000) on “Women, Peace and Security”. Austria also took part in the debate on the UNSC’s working methods. The EU continued its close cooperation with the UNSC by way of EUFOR Tchad/RCA to support and prepare the hand-over to MINURCAT (see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.).
2. The Reform Debate

The debate about a reform of the UNSC has been going on for several years. Primary issues addressed in this context are the expansion of the UNSC and the improvement of its working methods. In spite of far-reaching support for the present proposals on working methods, no specific steps towards reform have been taken so far owing to the continued lack of consensus among UN member states concerning the issue of expansion. A potential “interim solution” involving a new category of “longer-term members” has not met with agreement, either. However, member states agreed on starting formal negotiations in February 2009.

3. The Work of the UN Security Council

3.1. Middle East

The adoption of Resolution 1850 (2008) on 16 December manifested the UNSC’s support for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations that had started in Annapolis, it urged both parties to adhere to the obligations under the Road Map and called for stepping up diplomatic efforts for mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence of all states in the region (see Chapter A.VI.7.1.). Against the backdrop of a series of attacks and the struggle for ending the head-of-state power vacuum, the UNSC adopted numerous press releases, presidential statements, and resolutions on Lebanon. The situation in South Lebanon had been characterised by tense quiet once the UN Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) had been deployed. However, little headway was made towards a durable truce between Israel and Lebanon in view of continuing reports about arms smuggling into Lebanon across the Syrian border, Israeli overflights, the Israeli occupation of Ghajar, and disputes about the Shebaa farms territory. In a presidential statement of 22 May, the UNSC welcomed the agreement on electing a President of State, the formation of a national unity government, and other modalities of national reconciliation facilitated by the League of Arab States in Doha (Qatar). The UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1823 (2008) on 27 August thereby extending the UNIFIL mandate for another year until 31 August 2009. In June, the Belgian Johan Verbeke succeeded Geir Pedersen to the office of UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, but was succeeded in this capacity by Michael Williams from Great Britain after having been nominated UN Special Representative for Georgia in August.

Daniel Bellemare, head of the International Independent Investigation Commission (IIIC) established to support the Lebanese authorities in investigating the bomb attack on former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, and future Chief Prosecutor of the Special Tribunal, reported to the UNSC on progress made by the Commission at quarterly intervals. On 16 December the IIIC’s mandate was extended until 28 February by Resolution 1852 (2008) to enable IIIC to continue its investigations and to ensure a smooth transition.
The United Nations Security Council

to the Special Tribunal in The Hague which will become operational as of 1 March 2009.

3.2. Iraq

The head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Special Representative of the UNSG, Staffan de Mistura, and the USA reported to the UNSC on the situation in Iraq at quarterly intervals. As the security situation improved, the UN expanded their presence in Iraq and focused their efforts on promoting national reconciliation, preparing for the 2009 elections, and improving the protection of human rights. All members of the UNSC acknowledged the importance of the International Compact with Iraq (ICI). On 7 August, the UNSC extended the UNAMI mandate by twelve months by adopting Resolution 1830 (2008). By adopting Resolution 1859 (2008) on 22 December, the UNSC extended the mandates of the Development Fund for Iraq (DFI) and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq (IAMB) until 31 December 2009; additionally, these two mandates are to be reviewed by 15 June 2009. The mandate of the Multinational Forces (MNF) in Iraq ended on 31 December. It was replaced by a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) governing the military presence of the USA in Iraq after the MNF’s UN mandate has expired.

3.3. Iran

The conflict involving the Iranian nuclear programme continued. As Iran failed to comply with the UNSC’s demands under Resolutions 1696 (2006), 1737 (2006), and 1747 (2007) calling upon it above all to suspend all enrichment and reprocessing activities, the UNSC tightened its sanctions. In Resolution 1803 (2008), adopted by 14 votes with one abstention (Indonesia) on 3 March, the UNSC imposed comprehensive obligations on all UN Member States, relating specifically to the entry and transit of persons involved in the Iranian nuclear programme, the granting of export credits, guarantees and insurances to nationals and/or institutions doing business with Iran, and the examination of cargo transported by certain Iranian carriers in case of reasonable suspicion, including the obligation to notify the UNSC. Iran immediately rejected this resolution as an “illegal act” of the UNSC and refused to implement the UNSC’s demands. Against the backdrop of the war in Georgia and the tensions between the USA and Russia, the adoption by consensus of UNSC Resolution 1835 (2008) on 27 September calling for the immediate implementation of the UNSC’s previous demands by Iran, is of particular significance.

3.4. Afghanistan

At the beginning of March, Kai Eide from Norway was appointed Special Representative of the UNSG for Afghanistan and head of the UN Assist-
Global Cooperation – The United Nations

March the UNSC extended UNAMA’s mandate by another twelve months.
In this resolution, the UNSC extended UNAMA’s coordinating functions
and gave it a supportive role in promoting national reconciliation. On 11
June, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1817 (2008), thereby for the first time
addressing the special issue of chemical precursors for the production of
heroin in Afghanistan. In this resolution, the UNSC referred to the inter-
relations between international security, terrorism, organised crime, money
laundering, and drug and arms trafficking. On 22 September, the mandate of
the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was extended by twelve
months under Resolution 1833 (2008). The UNSC visited Afghanistan from
21 to 28 November to affirm its support of the reconstruction and peace
building processes and to monitor the Afghan government’s progress in the
areas of security, good governance, rule of law, human rights, economic and
social development, and drug control.

3.5. Nepal

By Resolution 1796 (2008), adopted on 23 January, the UNSC extended the
UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) for a period of six months. In line with the
provisions set out in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement the Mission’s
main tasks include monitoring the management of arms and armed person-
nel of both sides as well as providing support for the preparation of the elec-
tion of a Constituent Assembly on 10 April. On request from the government
of Nepal, UNMIN was extended by another six month period by Resolution
1825 (2008). UNMIN’s size was considerably reduced in the process. During
the second half of the year it became obvious that the progress achieved in
the reforms of the security sector was insufficient for discontinuing UNMIN
as planned upon expiry of its mandate in January 2009. In December, Nepal
therefore requested another extension of UNMIN mandate in reduced format
for another six months. Austria seconded two military observers until the
end of July.

3.6. Myanmar

In the course of the year, the UNSC met four times for consultation with the
Special Advisor to the UNSG on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari. A short press
release was adopted by the UNSC during the first round of consultation on 17
January, confirming the presidential statement on Myanmar from 11 October
2007 and deploiring the slow progress in implementing the demands set forth
therein. In a presidential statement adopted on 2 May, the UNSC referred to
the referendum on the draft constitution scheduled for 10 May calling on the
government of Myanmar to create conditions and a climate conducive to a
reliable process involving all parties. Owing to the extensive damage done
by cyclone Nargis in May, international attention focused on the humanitar-
ian crisis for several months. The UNSG visited Myanmar from 22 to 24 May and on 24 May chaired a donor conference for victims of the disaster caused by the cyclone, organised by the UN and ASEAN (see also Chapter D.IV.1.).

3.7. Timor-Leste
In reacting to the attempted assassinations of President José Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão, the UNSC adopted a presidential statement on the situation in Timor-Leste on 11 February in which it condemned the attempted assassinations most sharply and called upon all parties to peacefully resolve the conflicts within the framework of democratic institutions (see also Chapter A.VI.11.1.3.). On 25 February, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) by twelve months under Resolution 1802 (2008). This was in keeping with the calls issued by the UNSG and the request of the government of Timor-Leste that by extending the mission a long-term signal of support to Timor-Leste be set.

3.8. Kosovo
See Chapter A.VI.3.1.3.

3.9. Bosnia and Herzegovina
See Chapter A.VI.3.1.5.

3.10. Georgia
The UNSC dealt with the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, which was characterised by a deterioration of the local security situation. The adoption of a resolution on the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August failed after lengthy negotiations. The differences in positions between Russia and the UNSC’s western member states were insurmountable; the latter’s demand for referring to the territorial integrity of Georgia becoming ultimately unacceptable for Russia after having recognised Abkhazia and South Ossetia. On 9 October, the UNSC unanimously voted in favour of Resolution 1839 (2008) extending the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) for four months until 15 February 2009. The UNSC did not reach consensus, however, on issues such as changing the Mission’s name, which, as demanded by Russia, was to reflect the new situation after Abkhazia’s declaration of independence, and adapting the Mission’s tasks.

3.11. Cyprus
Based on a joint declaration of 21 March, the two ethnic group leaders, Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat, started direct negotiations on resolving the Cyprus issue on 3 September. On 14 July, UNSG Ban Ki-moon appointed
Alexander Downer as Special Advisor to support this process. In June and in December, Under-SG Lynn Pascoe and the newly appointed Special Representative of the UNSG in Cyprus, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, reported to the UNSC on progress made in the negotiations. The UNSC welcomed the beginning of direct negotiations and underlined the importance of confidence-building measures for progress to continue. On 12 December, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1847 (2008) which extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) by six months until 15 June 2009.

3.12. Haiti

On 14 October, the UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 1840 (2008) extending the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) by one year, detailing it further, and maintaining the mission’s military and police capacities. In this resolution, the UNSC recognised that the natural disasters and the food price increases, which affected Haiti with particular intensity, had compromised Haiti’s long-term stability and security. The UNSC invited the UN member states to cooperate with MINUSTAH in combating illicit trafficking in human beings, drugs, and arms and condemned cruelty to children, including sexual violence against girls.

3.13. Africa

Conflicts on the African continent dominated the major part of the UNSC’s work. The majority of soldiers, police forces, and civilians involved in peacekeeping missions are deployed in Africa. One of the two trips undertaken by the UNSC led it to Djibouti, Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Côte d’Ivoire.

3.13.1. Sudan

The situation in Sudan played a central role in the deliberations within the UNSC. The humanitarian and security situations remained precarious. The mandate of the African Union – United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was extended by twelve months until 31 July 2009 by Resolution 1828 (2008). Serious problems continued to affect the implementation of the mandate owing to the cross-border conflict with Chad, the lack of commitment on the part of the Sudanese government, and want of sufficient numbers and operational capability of the authorised troops.

In line with UNSC Resolution 1593 (2005), Luis Moreno-Ocampo, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) submitted his eighth semi-annual report on the state of the investigations of the situation in Sudan/Darfur on 3 December. The decision of the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber concern-
The United Nations Security Council

ing the application for a warrant of arrest to be issued against the President of Sudan Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir is expected for the beginning of 2009.

Under Resolution 1812 (2008) of 30 April, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) for another year. Within the existing mandate, the UNSC extended UNMIS’ responsibilities to also include supporting the parties in solving the Abyei border conflict, disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration (DD&R), rule of law, police and judicial reforms, preparation of elections, conflict management, humanitarian aid, and repatriation of refugees.

3.13.2. Chad/Central African Republic

The security situation in the border region between Chad and the Central African Republic remained tense. Under Resolution 1834 (2008) of 24 September, the extension of the mandate of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) until 15 March 2009 was unanimously adopted. The UNSC also indicated its intention to extend MINURCAT beyond 15 March and to supplement it by a military component replacing the ESDP operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA (see Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.). In his report of 4 December, the UNSG presented his recommendations suggesting that the mandate be largely maintained the way it was and that protection of civilians was to remain the focus. The number of troops proposed was 4,900. In December, the mandate of the UN Peace-Building Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) was extended for another year until the end of 2009.

3.13.3. Ethiopia and Eritrea

See Chapter A.VI.10.2.1.

3.13.4. Somalia

By adopting Resolution 1801 (2008) on 20 February, the UNSC approved the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), whose mandate was extended for six months on 19 August by Resolution 1831 (2008). With four battalions from Uganda and Burundi, however, the intended number of 8,000 troops was not reached by the end of the year.

Under Resolution 1844 (2008) of 20 November, the UNSC extended the sanctions on Somalia, that had thus far been limited to an arms embargo.

Under Resolutions 1816 (2008) and 1846 (2008), respectively, the UNSC authorised measures against piracy off the Somali coast for six months at a time. In addition, Resolution 1851 (2008) gave authorisation to fight pirates on Somali mainland (see also Chapter A.VI.1.2.1.).
3.13.5. Burundi

By Resolution 1858 (2008) of 22 December, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) by a year until 31 December 2009. The UNSC welcomed the agreement achieved on 4 December between the Burundi government and the “National Liberation Forces” (Palipehutu-FNL) and called upon the parties to accomplish a speedy implementation. The government of Burundi was encouraged to take the measures necessary for holding free, fair and peaceful elections in 2010 and to step up its efforts to respect human rights. Palipehutu-FNL were called upon to cooperate with the government, the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism, and other parties, to fully implement the demobilisation and reintegration process of its members. In addition, the above and other militias were called upon to immediately release all child soldiers.

3.13.6. Democratic Republic of the Congo

In response to the dramatic deterioration of the humanitarian situation in East Congo owing to the resumption of fighting between the “Congrès National pour la Défense du Peuple” (CNDP) and the government army, the “Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo” (FARDC), in August, the UNSC on 20 November unanimously adopted Resolution 1843 (2008) to increase the headcount of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by approximately 3,000 personnel. On 3 November, the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, was appointed Special Envoy on the Great Lakes Region and shortly afterwards started his mediation efforts between the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the CNDP. Under Resolution 1856 (2008), unanimously adopted on 22 December, the UNSC decided to extend MONUC’s mandate by twelve months and declared the protection of civilians top priority.

Under Resolution 1807 (2008) of 31 March, the UNSC renewed the sanctions regime relating to the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 31 December and lifted the arms embargo against the government. In addition, the scope of individual sanctions was expanded to persons committing severe violations of international law, above all those directed against women. Under Resolution 1857 (2008) of 22 December, the existing sanctions were extended until 30 November and expanded to include persons illegally supporting the militia in East Congo by illicitly trading in raw materials and obstructing access to humanitarian aid in East Congo.

3.13.7. Côte d’Ivoire

By Resolutions 1795 (2008) and 1826 (2008) the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) by six months at a time, finally until 31 January 2009. In spite of the relatively stable security situation, the UNSC voiced concern about the presidential elections having been
postponed once again, as holding free and fair elections formed a substantial element of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement of March 2007.

Under Resolution 1842 (2008) of 29 October, the UNSC extended the sanctions concerning the trading in arms and diamonds in Côte d’Ivoire until 31 October 2009.

3.13.8. Liberia

On 29 September, the UNSC adopted Resolution 1836 (2008) extending the mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2009. In response to the improved security situation that was termed stable now and based on the UNSG’s recommendation, the UNSC reduced the number of troops by another 1,450 personnel, at the same time increasing the UNMIL police component by 240 personnel. The UNSG was to draft recommendations as to the further draw-down of forces by 15 February 2009.

By Resolution 1854 (2008) of 19 December, the UNSC extended for another twelve months the arms embargo against Liberia, the travel ban, and the asset freeze for persons associated with Charles Taylor.

3.13.9. Sierra Leone

Under Resolution 1829 (2008) of 4 August, the UNSC decided to set up the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) as of 1 October, thus ending the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). The mandate of the new mission covers a period of twelve months. The mission is mandated with supporting the government of Sierra Leone in resolving conflicts, promoting human rights and implementing reforms in the field of good governance.

3.13.10. Guinea-Bissau

In his report of 2 December, the UNSG appreciated the efforts of the government of Guinea-Bissau to hold fair elections. At the same time, however, he voiced concern over the increasing role played by drug trafficking in the country, which contributed to an aggravation of corruption and a weakening of public institutions. The UNSG called upon the international community to support Guinea-Bissau in building a national infrastructure to fight drug trafficking. The UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) until the end of June 2009 and mandated the UNSG with presenting proposals by that date concerning the transformation of UNOGBIS into an integrated office.

3.13.11. Western Sahara

Under Resolution 1813 (2008) of 30 April, the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was extended by twelve months. The
contract with Peter van Walsum, the UNSG’s Personal Envoy, expired as of 21 August. By the end of the year, a successor had not yet been appointed.

4. Peacekeeping Operations

At the beginning of the year, 18 peacekeeping operations were in place for which 119 states contributed personnel. Two operations were terminated, in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) and in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL). As of 9 December, UNMIK handed over in Kosovo all tasks in the field of the rule of law, including the police tasks, to the newly created EULEX KOSOVO. Furthermore, the UNSC decided to replace the expiring ESDP operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA by a military component under MINURCAT. The military and police personnel deployed by the end of the year totalled 91,712 (31 December 2007: 84,309). The largest operations were MONUC (18,422 personnel), UNAMID (15,136 personnel), UNIFIL (12,435 personnel) and UNMIL (11,853 personnel). As has been the case during the last few years, the Asian and African states contributed the largest numbers of personnel. Especially in the UN peacekeeping operations in Africa there is still substantial need for armed troops with appropriate protective gear.

The **Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations** focused particularly on the implementation of last year’s decision to reorganise the UN Secretariat in the field of peacekeeping operations. The main topics dealt with by the Committee referred to the field of security and safety of UN personnel, improvement of the UN’s capabilities, the African peacekeeping capabilities, cooperation between the UN and regional organisations – particularly the AU, and peacebuilding activities in post-conflict situations. In this context, Austria primarily advocated measures to improve the safety and security of personnel in UN peacekeeping operations, enhanced cooperation in investigations as well as improved exchange of information between the UN, the countries seconding troops and the respective parties.

At the end of the year, 401 Austrians (388 soldiers, 10 military observers and 3 police officers, all figures referring to both the male and the female gender) were serving in six UN peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, 699 soldiers were deployed as part of the armed forces in Kosovo (KFOR) authorised by the UNSC. Two Austrians participated in ISAF, authorised by the UNSC in Afghanistan; 114 Austrians took part in the EU-led operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea) and 162 Austrians participated in the EU-led operation in the Central African Republic and Chad (EUFOR Tchad/RCA). By the end of the year, Austria contributed the fifth-largest number of personnel out of all EU Member States (after Italy, France, Spain and Poland) to UN-led missions and peacekeeping operations, thus occupying rank 34 among the 119 troop-contributing UN member countries.
IV. The UN Peacebuilding Commission

The UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) was established in December 2005 by the UNGA and the UNSC acting concurrently. It is an inter-governmental advisory body of the United Nations thus assuming a special position within the UN system. The PBC was created to support peace efforts in countries emerging from armed conflict and assist them in post-conflict peace building, recovery, reconstruction and development in order to avoid relapse into a renewed conflict by helping to bridge the often identified gaps between the end of a peacekeeping operation and the beginning of effective development cooperation efforts.

On 23 June, the PBC completed its second session and adopted its second annual report. Immediately afterwards the PBC opened its third session period. The PBC completed its work on the country-specific configurations with the biannual review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Burundi and the Sierra Leone Peacebuilding Cooperation Framework. The Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in Guinea Bissau was adopted in October. In June, the Central African Republic was put on the PBC's agenda. In its second year, the PBC succeeded in further developing and enhancing its pragmatic and results-oriented approach by paying numerous country visits and involving the local UN bodies as well as donor representatives more systematically in its activities.

V. The Economic and Social Council

1. General Information

The Working Session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was held in New York from 30 June to 24 July. Austria was a member of ECOSOC for the period from 2006-2008. The major topic of the Session’s high-level segment was sustainable development. The first session of the Development Cooperation Forum was held also within this forum. The topics addressed included key issues of development cooperation, such as consistent and coherent donor policies, orientation of partner systems, focus on achieving the desired effects and mutual accountability. In a Ministerial Declaration member states recommended increased investment in agriculture, the development of cleaner and more affordable energy technologies, improvement of trade and macro-economic policies and a consistently sustainable development policy.

The coordination segment focused on the role played by the UN system in the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Discussions in the operational activities segment dealt with the implementation of ECOSOC resolutions and decisions by the UN system. In the general segment, participants considered the reports prepared by the ECOSOC special commissions and expert groups.
2. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

As one of the five UN regional commissions, the 56-member Geneva-based United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) focuses primarily on forging stronger ties between the economically weaker countries – particularly countries in transition and Central Asian countries – and the rest of Europe, especially in the areas of transport, environment, energy, human settlements, facilitating trade and company development. The reform of UNECE, which focuses on enhancing transparency, streamlining its institutional structures and putting the topics of environment and transport further up the agenda is to be completed in 2009.

VI. The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the only international court with a universal nature and general jurisdiction. All 192 member states of the United Nations are parties to its Statute, 66 have accepted the ICJ’s compulsory jurisdiction in accordance with Article 36 Paragraph 2 of its Statute.

In May, the International Court of Justice determined that sovereignty over the Island of Pedra Branca belonged to Singapore and the Middle Rock islands belonged to the territory of Malaysia. In June, the Court found that France, by not giving Djibouti the reasons for its refusal to execute the letter rogatory presented by the latter in November 2004, failed to comply with its international obligation under Article 17 of the 1986 Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters and that the finding of this violation constitutes appropriate satisfaction. With the issue of an interim injunction, the Court of Justice ordered in July that the United States of America shall take all measures necessary to ensure that five Mexican nationals are not executed pending final judgement in this case. With another provisional measure the ICJ ordered in October that Georgia and Russia shall refrain from any act of racial discrimination and from sponsoring, defending or supporting such acts; that they shall facilitate humanitarian assistance and refrain from any action which might prejudice the respective rights of the parties or might aggravate or extend the dispute over South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

VII. The United Nations Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

In fulfilling its tasks of inter alia fighting global poverty and hunger, supporting structural reforms in agriculture and strengthening rural areas, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) was faced with the challenges posed in 2008 by the global food crisis.
Based on the FAO Initiative on Soaring Food Prices, a High-Level Conference on Food Security entitled the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy was held in Rome from 3 to 5 June. In the presence of numerous Heads of State and Government, a declaration on short, medium and long-term measures was adopted to manage the crisis and help the more than 925 million people affected by hunger around the globe. At the invitation of Federal Minister Josef Pröll and in the presence of FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf, the 26th FAO Regional Conference for Europe convened in Innsbruck from 26 to 27 June. The main topics on the agenda were the impacts of climate change on European agriculture and the promotion of traditional, regional agricultural products as a contribution to securing sustainable rural development. At the 34th meeting of the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS), held in Rome from 14 to 17 October, the initiatives launched by the UN in connection with the food crisis were discussed and the Comprehensive Framework for Action prepared by the High-Level Task Force on the Food Security Crisis was presented.

2. International Labour Organisation

At the 97th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC), held from 28 May to 13 June, Austria was elected full member of the Administrative Council of the International Labour Organization (ILO) for the years 2008-2011. The ILC adopted the Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalisation, to the development of which Austria had made substantial contributions. This Declaration, known as the Decent Work Agenda, firmly enshrines the approach taken by ILO and its members in their efforts to achieve fair globalisation. Other important topics were the promotion of rural employment for poverty reduction, enhancing skills development and strategies for decent work against the background of global factors of influence, including in particular the real estate and food crisis. The Austrian termination of the ILO Convention on the Employment of Women on Underground Work in Mines of all Kinds was deposited on 3 April with the International Labour Office and will become effective one year after its deposition. The ADA decided to support a three-year ILO project on the consolidation of the legal and institutional basis of social dialogue in the Western Balkan countries and Moldova with about 1.5 million euros.

3. International Telecommunications Union

The Geneva-based International Telecommunications Union (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.
At the plenary of the World Telecommunications Standardisation Assembly of the International Telecommunications Standardisation Sector (ITU-T), held in Johannesburg from 21 to 30 October, one of the dominant topics was the closing of the gaps between developing and industrialised countries. The third meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) took place in Hyderabad (India) in December and dealt with the topic of realising a multilingual Internet, access to information, network safety and confidence as well as protection of critical Internet resources.

4. International Fund for Agricultural Development

The central task of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is to combat rural hunger and poverty and increase food production. The Fund mobilises the necessary resources for the support of the poorest rural populations in the developing countries who can thus be granted loans on very favourable conditions as well as non-repayable subsidies. Central elements of this strategy are facilitated access to small loans, adapted technologies, fair markets, basic infrastructure, health services and primary education. In the past 30 years, IFAD funded roughly 785 projects involving a total value of 10.3 billion US dollars. The IFAD’s services are complementary to the loans granted by the World Bank Group and the regional development banks. Austria is a founding member of IFAD and has so far contributed approximately 40 million euros to the Fund’s capital.

5. International Civil Aviation Organization

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) was established to promote the safe and orderly development of international civil aviation worldwide in the fields of technology, business and law. Observance of the ICAO standards is reviewed regularly and in detail under the Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP). Austria was subjected to this review and prepared a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) based on the audit report. The actions set out in this plan were largely accepted by ICAO, although additional information has to be provided for some of these corrective actions. All 190 member states will be made aware of the overall report including the audit results and the respective corrective actions.

6. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

The implementation of the Medium-Term Strategy for 2008-2013 in the field of education as well as the worldwide action programme Education for All were at the heart of the activities launched by the United Nations Educa-
The United Nations Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations

tional, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). Under this strategy
the adult illiteracy rate is to be reduced by half by 2015, lifelong quality edu-
cation ensured for all and knowledge for sustainable development mobilised.

Under the International Year of Languages, UNESCO, being the leading UN
organisation in this context, coordinated the relevant worldwide activities
aimed at strengthening and promoting linguistic diversity under the motto of
“Languages matter!”. Austria had given the impetus for this year of languages
in 2005 by introducing a resolution at the 33rd session of UNESCO’s General
Conference, which was adopted winning the support of numerous countries.
The international expert-level conference on Everyday Multilingualism, held
in Eisenstadt in June marked the highlight of Austria’s relevant activities.

Another priority of UNESCO’s activities was the promotion of cultural
diversity and intercultural dialogue. After the successful negotiation of two
international conventions in the fields of culture in the past few years, the
focus was now placed on the implementation of their respective provisions.
Thus, the Second Session of the General Assembly of States Parties to the
2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage
was held, and two sessions of the Convention on the Protection and Promo-
tion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of which Austria is a member
until 2009. At the 32nd session of the World Heritage Committee that took
place in Quebec City (Canada) in July, 27 new natural and cultural sites were
inscribed into the World Heritage List which now includes 878 sites in 145
countries. UNESCO also cooperated closely with the International Bioethics
Committee (IBC), to which Christiane Druml from the Ethics Commission of
Vienna’s General Hospital was appointed. Another recognition of the com-
mitted and competent work performed by Austrians is the appointment of
Günter Köck from the Austrian Academy of Sciences as new member of the
Scientific Council at the UNESCO Office in Venice. During the second half
of the year UNESCO placed the focus on the 60th anniversary of the signing
of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A number of commemorative
events clearly emphasised the contribution UNESCO makes to promoting
and strengthening the right to education, the right to participating in cultural
life, the right to freedom of expression and the right to participating in sci-
entific progress.

7. World Health Organization

The 61st World Health Assembly, held from 19 to 24 May, coincided with the
60th anniversary of the foundation of the World Health Organization (WHO)
at which a resolution on the global strategy for public health and intellectual
property as well as a number of specific resolutions dealing inter alia with the
Millennium Development Goals relating to health, climate change, influenza
pandemics and mutilation of female genitals were adopted. In the presence
of the WHO Deputy Director-General, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra
gave a concert in Geneva on 29 September to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Organization’s foundation. At the 3rd Conference of the Parties to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, which was held in Durban (South Africa) from 17 to 22 November, participants decided to continue the negotiations on the Protocol on Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products.

8. International Atomic Energy Agency

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which was established in 1957, is based in Vienna and employs around 2,200 staff. The Agency’s principal task is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to verify adherence to the commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). For two years, until September, Austria was a member of the IAEA Governing Board, the Agency’s steering body composed of 35 states. The IAEA continued to remain at the focus of international attention in connection with its verification work in respect of Iran’s nuclear programme.

Against the background of the potential danger involved in the use of nuclear energy, Austria placed the focus of its activities within the IAEA on the areas of nuclear safety and non-proliferation. In this spirit Austria also introduced its position at the debate on the priorities of the Agency’s future work, which was opened by IAEA Director-General Mohamed El Baradei. A topic discussed in this context was the initiative on the multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle, launched by Austria. In this connection the project on the establishment of a nuclear fuel reserve under IAEA auspices represents a first step in the spirit of this Austrian initiative. The goal is to prevent states that are users of nuclear energy from developing their own uranium enrichment technologies for reasons of supply security which could also be misused for the purpose of arms programmes. In December the EU decided to grant both political and financial support to initial multilateralisation activities.

9. World Tourism Organization

The Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, serving as a forum for global tourism policy issues, a source of tourism know-how and statistics. Its membership includes 154 full members and seven associate members. Austria has been a full member since 1975. From 1995 to 2007, Austria was a member of the Programme Committee, in which it held the chair for the period from 1999 to 2007. Since 2007, Austria has held the Vice-Presidency of the Regional Commission for Europe (CEU). The 48th Session of the CEU was held in Prague on 15 and 16 May. Conferences and projects were dedicated to dealing more specifically with the issue of “Climate Change and Tourism”, which topped the agenda of the XVIIth General Assembly in 2007. Another priority was the analysis of the impacts of the economic
The United Nations Specialized Agencies and Related Organizations

slump on tourism and the development of potential actions to counter this development. Together with UNWTO the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour and Statistics Austria organised working meetings and seminars dealing with ways and means to improve tourism statistics.

10. Universal Postal Union

The XXIVth Universal Postal Congress took place in Geneva from 23 July to 12 August. The Universal Postal Congress is the supreme authority of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) and convenes every four years. This year’s congress brought together 2,700 delegates from 181 member states and the central task was the review of contracts and agreements to enable member states to integrate new products and services into the international postal network.

11. World Meteorological Organisation

Founded in 1951, the Geneva-based World Meteorological Organization (WMO) coordinates and supports the worldwide development of a meteorological and hydrological measurement and observation network. Apart from standardising global weather monitoring, it also seeks to ensure the efficient exchange of data, inter alia in aviation, navigation and agriculture. Environmental protection and the development of early warning systems for earthquakes are further central elements of the WMO’s work. The work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in which the WMO is pro-actively involved, won international recognition through the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2007.
F. Global Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery

The strengthening and further development of the system of international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is one of the declared goals of Austria’s foreign policy. A central element in this context, were the efforts towards a rapid entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Austria’s leading role in the elaboration of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, signed in Oslo in December, ties in with the country’s traditional engagement against anti-personnel mines.

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

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which took effect in 1970, forms the basis of the international nuclear regime under international law being at the same time one of the cornerstones of nuclear non-proliferation. Under the Treaty, the states parties – with the exception of the five nuclear-weapons states recognised under the Treaty – undertake to renounce nuclear weapons while they are granted the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. For their part, the five nuclear-weapons states, China, France, the United Kingdom, Russia and the United States of America, commit themselves to nuclear disarmament and to the objective of completely eliminating nuclear weapons. India, Israel and Pakistan are the only states which are not parties to the NPT. Although the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had declared its withdrawal from the NPT in 2003, this has not been recognised internationally.

The states parties meet for a Review Conference at five years’ intervals to evaluate the status of the NPT’s implementation. Following the huge progress achieved at the 2000 Review Conference where a 13-step plan of action for nuclear disarmament was adopted, the 2005 Conference failed to produce results. The second session of the Preparatory Committee for the next Review Conference scheduled for 2010, was held in Geneva from 28 April to 9 May. Austria took the opportunity of this session to introduce its proposal on multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle, presented in 2007, to the debate (see Chapter E.VII.8.).
2. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) provides for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear explosions. Since the adoption of the draft treaty by the UN General Assembly in 1996, 180 states have signed the CTBT and 148 countries, including Austria, have ratified the Treaty. As only 35 of the 44 Key States listed in Annex 2 have ratified the CTBT, it has not yet entered into force. In September 2007 Austria, together with Costa Rica, took over the co-chair of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty for a period of two years. Austria, in its capacity as co-chair, has undertaken intensive efforts to speed up the treaty ratification process. In this context special attention was attached to the Caribbean and the Pacific region, where Austria funded a number of conferences and seminars. Together with the “Group of Friends of the CTBT”, Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan and the Netherlands, Costa Rica and Austria jointly organised a ministerial meeting on the CTBT in the margins of the UNGA. Among the participants at this event were Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, UNSG Ban Ki-moon, the actor and United Nations Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas and the former United States Secretary of Defense William Perry.

The Vienna-based Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the CTBT Preparatory Commission for the Organization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT PrepCom) started work in March 1997. Its main task is to establish the International Monitoring System (IMS) provided for in the CTBT, with a total of 321 monitoring stations, 16 radionuclide laboratories and an International Data Centre in Vienna. Seismic data collected via the IMS are also supplied regularly to an international tsunami warning system, which adds to the significance of the work of the CTBT PrepCom and reaches beyond the sphere of non-proliferation.

3. Geneva Conference on Disarmament

The Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) was established in 1979 and comprises 65 member states. The Conference, of which Austria became a member in 1996, has for twelve years striven to overcome the deadlock in terms of substantial results. The deliberation on issues involving nuclear disarmament, the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, FMCT), negative security assurances and the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS), launched in 2006 was in fact intensified, but eventually members again failed to adopt a working programme thus thwarting the start of negotiations on an FMCT.
4. **Chemicals Weapons Convention**

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997, introduced a ban on all chemical weapons and stipulates the phased destruction of chemical weapons. At the Second Review Conference held in The Hague in April, the states parties reconfirmed their obligations arising from the Convention. With 185 states parties to it, the Convention has now come close to reaching its stipulated objective of universal effect. Progress was made in the destruction of existing stockpiles in India, the Republic of Korea, Libya, Russia and the USA. Out of a total of 71,373 tons of chemical weapons declared by the states, 29,985 tons or 42% of the reported stocks have been destroyed. In July the Republic of Korea completed the destruction of its stockpiles, thus being the second chemical weapons possessor state after Albania to do so. The other possessor states, including Russia and the USA, requested an extension of the deadline, which was originally fixed for 2007, to the latest possible date of 29 April 2012.

The process of implementing the EU Joint Action in support of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), funded with approximately 1.7 million euros, was continued. In May, Austria began a two-year membership of the Executive Council of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

5. **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention**

Signed in 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) prohibits the development, production and stockpiling of biological and toxin weapons. Currently 163 countries are states parties to the BTWC. At the Annual BTWC Experts Meetings and Meetings of States Parties, held in Geneva, deliberations focussed on measures to increase biosecurity and biosafety as well as oversight, education, training and awareness-raising with regard to dual-use goods.

6. **Ballistic Missiles**

The Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC) against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is the only normative instrument dealing with the non-proliferation of ballistic missiles and cruise missiles. So far 130 states have subscribed to the HCOC. Austria serves as the HCOC’s Central Contact (Executive Secretariat) thus acting as an interface for the entire exchange of information within this mechanism. The main focus of this politically binding multilateral Code is on confidence-building measures, including, for instance, advance notice of missile launches. Since the HCOC came into force, seven Annual Meetings of Subscribing States have been held in Vienna, the most recent one in May. The topics discussed at this meeting dealt with the reliable implementation
II. Arms Control and Disarmament in the Field of Conventional Weapons

1. Anti-Personnel Mines

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Ottawa Convention) was adopted in 1997, entered into force in 1999 and has so far been signed by 156 states parties. Austria is one of the leading states in the Ottawa Process and especially committed to the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction. Austria continued its active contribution to the international process for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and the implementation of the Austrian Mine Action Programme. Since 1999, funds have been provided to the programme, with 1.4 million euros made available in 2008.

The Ottawa Convention has developed into one of the most successful instruments in the fields of humanitarian international law and disarmament. The use and production of mines was clearly reduced and trade in anti-personnel mines has almost stopped entirely. To date more than 40 million mines have been destroyed and large areas of contaminated land have been cleared of mines. At the Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention held in Geneva in November, deliberations centred on the extension of deadlines for mine clearance in 15 states. Victim assistance continues to remain one of the Convention’s top priorities, with the economic and social reintegration of the victims constituting the biggest challenge.

2. Cluster Munitions

Implementing one of its foreign policy priorities, Austria actively advocated the ban under international law of cluster munitions, an extremely dangerous weapon due to its effect on wide areas and the risk which unexploded ordnance devices pose to civilians. The Oslo Process launched in 2007 by Ireland, the Holy See, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Peru and Austria, was continued with a conference held in Wellington in February. At this meeting a draft convention based on the results of the Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions held in December 2007, was the subject of intensive discussions. At the Dublin Conference on Cluster Munitions in May, 107 states adopted the text of a Convention on Cluster Munitions. The agreement was signed by 94 states in Oslo in December, at the same time Austria launched the national ratification process.
The Convention on Cluster Munitions is the most important disarmament treaty since the Ottawa Convention of 1997 and is an essential further development of international humanitarian law. It provides for a categorical ban on the use, development, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and covers all types of weapons used so far. In the field of victims’ assistance new forward-looking standards were set, to which Austria contributed with its pro-active commitment.

Austria contributed funding to a regional conference to support the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Uganda and a UNICEF project on marking and awareness-raising in Georgia. Negotiations on a ban on cluster munitions under the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCWC), in which also the large possessor and producer states participated, ended in November without producing results.

3. Small Arms and Light Weapons

Causing about 500,000 casualties annually, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) are increasingly considered as the real weapons of mass destruction. Their destabilising effect is closely related to the rising number of internal conflicts and the high rate of violence and crime, even after conflicts have been terminated. It is Austria’s objective to contain these disastrous consequences, advocating this cause in the relevant bodies of the UN and other multilateral organisations.

The Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the UN Programme of Action against the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in New York in July, ended with the adoption of a Final Outcome Document, which represents the first substantial success in the field of SALW since the adoption of the Programme of Action in 2001. Austria actively promoted the participation of developing countries in this conference, supported a conference on the UN Programme of Action to be held in West Africa in 2009 and provided financial support for a project run by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) on combating illicit brokering in SALW in Asia and the Pacific. Furthermore, Austria also funded an OSCE programme to secure and destroy SALW in Tajikistan.

III. Export Control Regimes

1. Multilateral Export Control Regimes

The objective pursued by the current five control regimes is to coordinate national export controls in order to prevent sensitive technology and know-how from falling into the hands of states that could use them for military
Export Control Regimes

purposes. The main instruments under these regimes are lists of the relevant goods and/or substances as well as guidelines governing exports to non-member states. Austria is a member of all five regimes. The national implementation of these instruments is covered for the most part by the Foreign Trade Act of 2005.

The relevant regimes in the nuclear context are the Vienna-based Zangger Committee (ZC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), with 37 and 45 members respectively. They 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. After years of negotiations the NSG adopted an exception from its guidelines for India in September. Until then, nuclear trade with non-member states of the NPT had been incompatible with the NSG guidelines. Being the last of the 45 NSG member states to do so, Austria did not withhold a consensus. A key reason for this decision was India’s political declaration to observe its unilateral commitments with respect to nuclear non-proliferation, its moratorium on nuclear testing and the NSG guidelines. The 41-member Australia Group (AG) endeavours to guarantee 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), which is composed of 34 members, is in charge of controlling the proliferation of missile technology (guided missiles and cruise missiles) capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Founded in 1997, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), which is composed of 40 participating states and whose Secretariat is based in Vienna, aims to prevent destabilising accumulations of conventional weapons and dual-use goods and technologies by coordinating national export controls, enhancing transparency and accountability. The WA’s priorities were the implementation of the conclusions of last year’s assessment process and explaining its practices towards inter alia the respective industry and Belarus, China and Israel. Another central challenge in the field is the export control of Man Portable Air Defence Systems (MANPADS).

The fact that irresponsible trading in arms has negative impacts on stability, security and human rights as well as on sustainable economic and development policies remains uncontested. Thus Austria and all partners within the EU have for many years now been pushing for taking an internationally coordinated approach by way of an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Following the completion of works undertaken by the group of government experts in August, the UNGA adopted a resolution in December on establishing a working group open to all member states to pursue the relevant deliberations.

2. National Export Controls

In Austria, arms exports covered by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports are governed by the Foreign Trade Act and the War Material Act. Defence
equipment subject to approval is defined in the Foreign Trade Regulation in conjunction with the Annex, which corresponds to the current version of the Wassenaar Control Lists and the items listed in the agreed EU Common Military List and defined by War Material Regulation.

Ten years after the adoption of the politically binding EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and its eight criteria Member States have to observe when assessing individual export licence applications, the EU established a legally binding arms export control instrument by adopting a Common Position in December. The adoption of this Common Position, which now also includes provisions relating to arms transit, technology transfer, sales and brokering, represented the completion of the review of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports launched in 2003. Information and consultation procedures set up in case licence applications are denied remain in place as a contribution to the harmonisation of national export control regimes and the improvement of coherence among EU partners. Moreover, this Common Position, called for by both the European Parliament and civil society for many years, also acts as a signal underlining the pioneering role the EU is playing in connection with the ATT initiative.

In support of the measures taken by the EU to promote the control of arms exports, the Council adopted a Joint Action in March. During a period of two years, seminars are to be held in East and South Eastern Europe, in the partner countries in the Mediterranean, in North Africa, Caucasus, Turkey and Ukraine. In this framework, the first events for the Western Balkan countries were held in Ljubljana (Slovenia), and for the North African partner countries in Rabat (Morocco).

The quality and transparency of the consolidated Annual Report, which is one of the sources of information on actual EU-wide exports, was further improved. The 10th Annual Report covering the year 2007 was published in November.
G. The International Protection of Human Rights

I. Introduction

The worldwide implementation of international human rights standards is a key concern for Austria. In this context, particular emphasis is placed on the abolition of the death penalty, the protection of minorities, the rights of women and children, particularly in armed conflicts, the situation of internally displaced persons, the prohibition of human trafficking, the promotion of democratisation and good governance, human rights education and international humanitarian law. Austria set important priorities on these issues within the European Union and international organisations including the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, as well as in bilateral political contacts with states throughout the world. A special focus of Austria’s activities in this regard was the strengthening of civil society.

II. Human Rights in the European Union

1. EU Human Rights Policy

The development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law as well as the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms are among the objectives laid down in the EU’s CFSP. Issues related to the EU’s human rights policy towards third countries are dealt with by the EU human rights directors in the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM) and in cooperation with geographical Council working parties and the Human Rights and Democracy Committee chaired by the European Commission. Austria has continued its efforts aimed at ensuring better integration of human rights in all EU policy areas and has successfully advocated further integration of human rights into EU crisis management activities. Austria supported the establishment of new EU human rights dialogues with all Central Asian States. Furthermore, the Vienna-based EU Agency for Fundamental Rights has been able to become fully operational since its first Director was appointed in May.

1.1. The Integration of Human Rights in the ESDP

Austria strongly supports the integration of human rights in all areas of ESDP activity, particularly with a view to promoting the rights of women and children in EU crisis management. Thus, both the 2006 checklist for the integration of the protection of children affected by armed conflict into ESDP policies and operations, prepared by the Austrian EU Council Presidency, and the 2006 checklist to ensure gender mainstreaming in the planning and conduct of ESDP operations were revised and further developed. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs conducted
training programmes on the rights of women and children for the members of the Austrian contingent of EUFOR Tchad/RCA.

1.2. European Union Guidelines on Human Rights

The EU Guidelines on Human Rights are documents adopted by the EU Council and comprise a catalogue of measures for the EU’s permanent commitment towards third countries on individual human rights issues. Specific pilot programmes were developed for the 2007 Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child, which are being implemented in a first phase in Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, India, Iran, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya and Russia. As a member of the EU Task Force on the Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict, established in December 2003 with active Austrian involvement, Austria participated in the preparation of projects and actions to both implement and update these guidelines. Close cooperation was continued with the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy.

The worldwide abolition of the death penalty is a priority of Austrian and EU human rights policy on the basis of the Guidelines to EU Policy towards Third Countries on the Death Penalty. In order to reach this goal, Austria and its partners in the EU have issued demarches and public statements and increasingly addressed this topic in regional and international bodies. The fact that yet another resolution against the death penalty, introduced by the EU, was adopted by the 63rd UNGA underscores the commitment of a growing number of states from all regions for the global abolition of the death penalty. At the event commemorating the 40th anniversary of the abolition of the death penalty in Austria on 8 February, State Secretary Hans Winkler stressed the important role the fight against this inhuman punishment played as a central concern of Austrian human rights policy. On a bilateral basis, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs worked towards the suspension of death sentences in numerous countries. Efforts were particularly intensive vis-à-vis China to avoid the execution of a death sentence against the Chinese father of two Austrian nationals. Throughout the entire year Austria intervened repeatedly with the Chinese authorities and initiated EU demarches. Alongside Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, Federal President Heinz Fischer, and President of the Austrian National Council Barbara Prammer, the Presidents of the three Austrian supreme courts, EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner and the European Parliament undertook efforts to prevent the execution. Notwithstanding all these interventions, the death sentence was carried out on 28 November. The execution was promptly condemned most sharply by Federal Minister Plassnik and the entire EU.

By adopting the Guidelines to EU Policy towards Third Countries on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the
EU has committed itself to continue working towards convincing third countries to eradicate torture. In order to achieve this goal, the topic is addressed in political dialogues and human rights dialogues with third countries and demarches are issued. Countries that have not yet signed the UN Convention against Torture are invited to do so; with countries that have already signed, issues related to effective implementation are discussed. Furthermore, specific problems countries may have in the handling of apprehended persons are addressed and support is offered in resolving such problems on a case-by-case basis. Accusations of torture in connection with individuals are also addressed by the EU. In 54 third countries, the respective local EU delegations issued demarches to this end; in 7 third countries interventions were undertaken in 15 individual cases.

Within the framework of the *Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders*, the EU developed local strategies for an effective implementation of these guidelines in cooperation with the respective local embassies in more than 80 states. In the course of this cooperation, priority is given to making the guidelines more widely known in the respective countries as well as to intensifying cooperation with local human rights defenders. In over 200 cases, the EU issued demarches in support of threatened human rights defenders. On Austria’s initiative and in cooperation with a number of partners within the EU *Guidelines on Combating Violence against Women* were developed and adopted at the General Affairs and External Relations Council in December.

### 1.3. European Agency for Fundamental Rights

The appointment of the first Director of the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Morten Kjaerum, in May marked the completion of the start-up phase for the new Vienna-based Agency. Austria supported the FRA’s internal consolidation process by organising a closed-door meeting for the Agency’s executives, Management Board members and European Commission representatives to discuss the FRA’s future strategic orientation and thematic priorities. With a view to quickly establishing the FRA as a central player in EU fundamental law issues, Director Kjaerum strove to establish close links and joint strategies with EU institutions, regional human rights institutions and civil society across Europe. The Agency’s staff was increased to include numerous experts on fundamental law issues.

By publishing studies on homophobia in Europe and Muslims in Europe, as well as a report on violent attacks against Roma in Italy, and providing counselling services on draft legislation to EU institutions, for instance in connection with the use of air passenger data, the FRA has already contributed to improving the protection of fundamental rights in Europe. Together with the French EU Presidency, the FRA organised a European Fundamental Rights Conference on freedom of expression in Paris in December.
The tenth EU Human Rights Forum, a platform for exchange of opinions and sharing of experiences between EU Member States, the Union’s institutions and civil society representatives, was held in Paris in December and dealt with discrimination against women. In this context, the topics of violence against women, human rights defenders and best practice approaches for non-discriminatory legislation were discussed by specific working groups.

In implementing the Vienna Declaration of 10 December 1998, the tenth EU Annual Report on Human Rights, which is co-written by all EU partners, was adopted. The updating of the human rights country fact sheets – which are based on an Austrian initiative – by the heads of EU missions in third countries continued. Concrete projects and programmes in the field of EU human rights policy are implemented mainly by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). An EU strategy on promoting democracy in third countries is being prepared.

Since 2000, the European Commission has undertaken about 50 EU election monitoring missions. Training seminars are offered for election observers as part of the EU project “Network of Europeans for Electoral and Democracy Support” (NEEDS). Seminars are also held at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung, ÖSFK). In 2008, about 30 Austrians participated in EU election monitoring missions in Angola, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nepal, Pakistan and Rwanda.

2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues

In December 2001, the EU adopted Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues that define various forms of dialogue: 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. In December, COHOM adopted a reviewed version of the Guidelines with a view to enhancing both the coherence and the efficiency of the framework conditions and targets of all EU Human Rights Dialogues.

The EU-China Structured Human Rights Dialogue has been conducted since 1995 and was continued in meetings held in May and November. In addition to the meetings at government level, expert seminars were held involving participants from the academic world, NGOs and official representatives of the EU and China. The issues addressed at the Dialogue referred to the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by China, cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, the reform of the “re-education through work” system, the reform of the judicial system, developments in Tibet and Xinjiang, the persecution of supporters of democratic movements, religious groups and the Falun Gong movement, and issues such as the death penalty, the prohibition of torture, religious freedom and human
rights violations in connection with the organisation of the Olympic Games in Beijing in August. The EU also regularly addresses individual human rights cases (see Chapter G.II.1.2.).

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, efforts were undertaken to resume the dialogue but have not succeeded because of the alarming human rights situation in Iran, which is also criticised in a resolution co-introduced by the EU and adopted by the 63rd UNGA. Austria is in principle in favour of continuing the human rights dialogue with Iran. At the same time, Austria has regularly addressed the numerous human rights violations in talks with the Iranian government.

The seventh and eighth rounds of **EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations** were held on 17 April and 21 October. In both rounds, the EU addressed the situation in Northern Caucasus, issues relating to the freedom of the media, expression and assembly, as well as the situation in connection with racial violence in Russia. In both rounds the EU handed over lists to Russia specifying individual cases for investigation and the provision of information. Both rounds were preceded by meetings between the EU delegation and Russian NGOs.

In implementing the EU-Central Asia Strategy, the first **Rounds of Human Rights Dialogues** were held between the EU and all five Central Asian states. The EU met with Uzbekistan in Brussels on 5 June, with Turkmenistan in Ashgabat on 24 June, with Kazakhstan in Astana on 15 and 16 October, with Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on 28 October and with Tajikistan in Dushanbe on 31 October. The meetings held with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan were the first of this kind.

After the first EU-AU Expert Meeting on Human Rights in September 2007, both parties decided to establish a regular **EU-AU Human Rights Dialogue**. At the first official meeting of this round of dialogue on 26 May both sides agreed on the framework and the modalities to be applied to the Dialogue.

The EU also agreed to hold regular human rights dialogues with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico.

The third meeting of the **EU-Israel Informal Working Group on Human Rights** was held in April. The most important topics addressed by the EU were the situation of the Arab minority, the restrictions to the freedom of movement for human rights defenders, children in armed conflict, the UN Human Rights Council and violation of the Bedouins’ land and housing rights.

### III. Human Rights in the United Nations

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

1. The Human Rights Council

The second year of the Human Rights Council’s (HRC) existence was marked by the completion of the reform process. The development of criteria for the new expert Advisory Committee and for the future Special Rapporteurs and the guidelines for the preparation of the state reports to be submitted to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) was completed and the future of the working groups of the former Sub-Commission clarified.

Set up as a successor to the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Human Rights Council could not fully meet the high expectations placed upon it. Meetings to be held several times per year and the UPR were supposed to be instruments the new institution could use to respond quickly and in a credible and effective manner to any human rights crisis emerging around the world. The nine regular sessions and three special sessions held up until the end of the year were, however, characterised by a lack of cooperation among the various regional groups, particularly when deliberations focused on topics like defamation of religions, freedom of expression and racism as well as on individual country situations like Israel/Occupied Palestinian Territories. Furthermore, the majority of the HRC’s members hold a generally negative view on country mandates.

As a result of the regional distribution, the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), to which the EU Member States belong, altogether only have eight of the 47 seats. In spite of this evident disadvantage in terms of negotiating positions, the EU emphatically advocates substantial and effective results and firmly opposes a weakening of the Council by some delegations and/or regional groups in order to enable the HRC to live up to the key role it is to play in the field of universal human rights work.

At the seventh regular session, held from 3 to 28 March, dialogues were held with the Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights dealing with minorities, torture, human rights defenders, violence against women, freedom of expression, racism and Myanmar, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour (Canada), announced that she would terminate her work as of the end of June at the end of the first term in office. The review of the Special Rapporteurs’ mandates was continued and all thematic mandates including that on minorities initiated by Austria, and all country mandates excluding that on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were extended. Repeated attempts by states to prevent the discussion
of their country situation by the EU as well as the successful attempt by the OIC to restrict the freedom of opinion by referring to the protection of religions against defamation gave rise to controversies.

The highlight of the **eighth regular session**, held from 2 to 18 June, which also marked the end of the HRC’s second year of work, was an interactive dialogue between the states and the outgoing UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Arbour. In her Annual Report, Arbour openly criticised numerous human rights violations worldwide, including in the EU in connection with illegal migration. Both the review of the majority of the Special Rapporteurs’ mandates as well as the first UPR of 32 states were completed. However, the introduction of a complaints procedure regarding the observation of a code of conduct for Special Rapporteurs led to controversy. Seeking supra-regional cooperation with moderate states, the EU eventually succeeded in defusing an originally unacceptable draft to the extent that the independent work of the mandate-holders will continue to be guaranteed. The announcement of the USA’s withdrawal from active work within the HRC, made during the session, attracted a lot of attention. Martin Uhomoibhi (Nigeria) was elected new President of the HRC.

At the **ninth regular session** from 8 to 24 September, the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay (South Africa), stressed the importance of combating impunity and the commitment to equal treatment of women and called upon all states to participate in the Review Conference of the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism in Geneva in April 2009. The priorities on the session’s agenda were the discussion of the UPR reports in the plenary, interactive dialogues with Special Rapporteurs and the completion of the review of the last three relevant mandates. Following difficult negotiations with the African Group, agreement was reached on the extension of the mandate on Sudan. When adopting a resolution on the Middle East following up the report of the exploratory mission on Beit Hanoun (Gaza Strip), where an Israeli attack on 8 November 2008 killed more than 20 civilians, no uniform EU voting behaviour could be achieved in spite of the intense efforts undertaken to this end by the EU Presidency. In a national statement, Austria presented the outcome of the international expert conference “Global Standards – Local Action” in Vienna in August (see Chapter G.III.4.).

Regarding the **three special sessions**, the session on the Middle East of 23 January, the third of its kind, primarily focused on Israel’s human rights violations and was therefore marked by the habitual controversies. No agreement was reached on a text for a resolution. Against the background of the global food crisis a special session on the right to food was held on 22 May being at the same time the first special session dealing with a global challenge. At the special session on the human rights situation in the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo of 28 November, a resolution was adopted.
by consensus which *inter alia* mandates Special Rapporteurs with launching investigations on site and reporting to the HRC.

2. The General Assembly

At the 63rd Session of the UNGA, the Third Committee dealt with some 60 resolutions. The growing support the resolution for the worldwide abolition of the death penalty won from states from all regions represented a huge success for the EU. Besides the resolutions on Burma/Myanmar and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea introduced by the EU, the resolution on the human rights situation in Iran, co-sponsored by the EU, was adopted. An EU declaration on the topic of human rights and sexual orientation was co-signed by 66 states from all regions.

From the human rights perspective, the 63rd UNGA represented a success for both Austria and the EU. Although there was some aligning and a formation of blocs of the “South” against the “North”, as had been the case last year, which meant that the Non-Aligned Movement and the G77 were able to prevail on various issues over the EU because of their majority of votes, the EU succeeded in achieving negotiation successes on important human rights issues by acting in partnership with other states.

The traditional resolution on the Rights of the Child was again introduced by the EU together with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States (GRULAC) and adopted with 180 votes in favour and one against; adoption by consensus was thwarted by the USA’s resistance. The resolution pushes for the swift appointment of a UN Special Representative on Violence against Children established at the 62nd UNGA and renews the mandate of the Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict for a further three years. Furthermore, the UNGA adopted a resolution on Religious Intolerance introduced by the EU which is led by the report prepared by the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, Asma Jahangir (Pakistan). The resolution on Combating Defamation of Religions, which had been introduced by the OIC, was rejected by the EU.

Following the adoption of the resolution on the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which was introduced by Portugal and which establishes an individual complaint mechanism, the Optional Protocol can be opened for signature. The resolution on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was introduced by Mexico and calls for signature and/or ratification by states, was also adopted.

With respect to gender issues, a resolution on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which *inter alia* re-defines the modalities governing the CEDAW Committee, and a resolution on violence against women were adopted. Furthermore, the 63rd
UNGA also adopted a resolution against State Policies of Sexual Violence, condemning rape and other forms of sexual violence as instruments of state policies, which had been introduced by the USA.

Austria introduced resolutions on the protection of the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities and on human rights in the administration of justice as well as a decision on minority rights, which were adopted by consensus.

3. Commission on the Status of Women

The 52nd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held in New York from 25 February to 7 March, was dedicated to the topic of “Financing for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women”. Alongside the conclusions on the main topic, resolutions on women, girls and HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation, the strengthening of the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and on women and children hostages were adopted without voting. For the first time the European Union did not succeed in agreeing on a joint approach when adopting the resolution on the situation of and support for Palestinian women, which the Union had always supported previously.

Under this year’s CSW, UNSG Ban Ki-moon launched a campaign to stop violence against women, which is aimed at mobilising public opinion, guaranteeing political support and ensuring that more resources are made available to cope with this issue. An interactive expert group dealt with the topic of gender perspective in climate change.

4. Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In cooperation with the Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights and the European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC), the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs organised an international experts conference on the topic of “Global Standards – Local Action” in Vienna on 28 and 29 August celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December and the 15th Anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights. At this conference more than 130 leading human rights experts from all over the world drafted concrete recommendations to improve the implementation of international human rights standards at local level. Subsequently, in autumn, Austria introduced these recommendations at both the UN Human Rights Council and the UNGA.
IV. Human Rights in the OSCE
See Chapter B.II.3.

V. Human Rights in the Council of Europe
The protection of human rights in the Council of Europe is largely based on the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the activities of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The rise in the number of Member States of the Council of Europe from 23 in 1989 to 47 today as well as the enhanced visibility and public awareness of the human rights system went hand in hand with a strong increase in individual applications to the ECHR. While some 4,000 individual applications were introduced in 1989, their number had risen to as many as about 50,000 in 2008, with an average of 92 per cent of individual applications being inadmissible. However, the ECHR is not able to deal finally and conclusively with more than 30,000 cases per year. In order to ensure and maintain the appropriate functioning of the ECHR, which is central to the protection of human rights in Europe, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its 114th session of 12 May 2006 adopted Protocol No. 14 on the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms amending the Control System of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. But as Russia has not yet ratified the document, it was not possible to launch the comprehensive reform of the system.

The European Commissioner for Human Rights, Thomas Hammarberg (Sweden), who took office in 2006 and is charged with counselling, advising and raising awareness of the issue of human rights in the member states, paid visits to Armenia, Belgium, Cyprus, Georgia, Italy, Macedonia, Monaco, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Russia, San Marino and Serbia. Since 2007, Jean-Paul Costa from France has been President of the ECHR; Elisabeth Steiner has been the Austrian judge at the ECHR since 2001; Dieter Wolfgang Halwachs has been a member of the expert committee on the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages since 2008; Hans Knitel is a judge at the Administrative Tribunal and Stefan Karner a member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI).

VI. The Human Security Network
The Human Security Network (HSN) is a cross-regional, interdisciplinary and action-oriented interest group of twelve states (Austria, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Greece, Ireland, Jordan, Mali, Norway, Slovenia, Switzerland and Thailand, as well as South Africa as an observer) that was established in 1998/1999 in the course of the Ottawa process for the preparation of the Anti-
**Priorities**

The concept of human security focuses on the security needs and requirements of the individual. Human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law are essential pillars of human security. The HSN focuses on the following topics: landmines, small arms, children and armed conflict, women, peace and security, human rights education, the dialogue among civilisations and, more recently, the human security impact of climate change on vulnerable groups including women, children and persons fleeing their homes due to climate change. During its term as Chair of the HSN from July 2002 to May 2003, Austria concentrated in particular on the issues of human rights education as well as children and armed conflict on which a HSN Manual on Human Rights Education “Understanding Human Rights” that has already been translated into fifteen languages and a training curriculum to strengthen the rights of the child, had been elaborated.

The **Ministerial Meeting** in Athens on 29 and 30 May focussed on the priority topic of the Greek Chair: impact of climate change on human security and development cooperation. In this context, particular attention was paid to the impact on women and children. The priority issue defined by the subsequent Irish Chairmanship is violence against women.

**VII. Priorities**

1. **Human Rights of Children**

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

For many years now, Austria has been pushing for enshrining a global ban on the recruitment and use of child soldiers. At the Free Children from War Conference held in Paris in 2007, Austria undertook to observe the Paris Commitments and the Paris Principles, which set the legal framework for the global alliance against the use of child soldiers. On the initiative of the French EU Presidency and UNICEF, the second follow-up meeting to this conference, held in the margins of the 63rd UNGA in New York on 26 September, brought together 75 states in order to evaluate the implementation of the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles. This meeting was also used as an opportunity to call upon all states to support and sign the Paris Commitments and Paris Principles.

As home to the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung, ÖSFK) Austria accommodates one of the leading training centres for the protec-
The International Protection of Human Rights

tion of children. Since 2006, the seminars held by this institution have been
attended by more than 100 participants from over 40 countries.

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs conducted
training programmes for the Austrian participants in EUFOR Tchad/RCA,
which specifically dealt with the protection of and relations with children
in armed conflict. By contributing to UN organisations or by way of bilateral
development cooperation, Austria supports projects for the reintegration of
child soldiers and children otherwise affected by war.

2. Human Rights of Women

The promotion of measures to fight violence against women and the protec-
tion of women who are committed to promoting other persons’ human rights
have always been a special concern in Austrian foreign policy.

Austria participated actively in the two open debates the UNSC held on the
topics of women, peace and security in June and October. On 18 June the
UNSC adopted UNSC resolution 1820 (2008), dealing with women and girls
affected by sexual violence in armed conflict. Almost eight years after the
adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), this is the second UNSC resolution on
the topic of women, peace and security calling for an end to systematic sex-
ual violence in armed conflict.

The first report on the implementation of the Austrian National Action Plan
on resolution 1325, adopted last year, was coordinated by the Federal Minis-
try for European and International Affairs, submitted to the Council of Minis-
ters in October and subsequently referred to the Austrian Parliament. It out-
lines the measures taken by Austria to promote the involvement of women
in peace processes and the strengthening of preventive measures to protect
women in armed conflict.

Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik took part in high-level meetings of women
leaders held in Athens, Brussels and New York. Her proposal regarding a
review of the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) ten years after
its adoption was taken up by the women leaders’ network and presented to
the UNSG suggesting that a high-level UN conference be held in 2010.

In the margins of the EU-LAC Summit, held in Lima in May, State Secretary
Hans Winkler met human rights defenders from Peru. Austria also suggested
the elaboration of EU guidelines on women’s rights with a focus on violence
against women and contributed pro-actively to the EU Task Force charged
with elaborating such guidelines.

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Defence, human rights semi-
nars focusing specifically on women and children in conflict situations were
organised for all members of the Austrian contingent participating in EUFOR
Tchad/RCA. On 19 February, Vienna was the venue for the international con-
ference “Women in Armed Conflict – The Implementation of UNSCR 1325”,
organised jointly with the Federal Ministry of Defence and NATO International Staff. In autumn, the first specialised seminar on women in armed conflict took place at the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ÖSFK).

Austria contributed 150,000 euros to UNIFEM in order to promote the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 (2000) in Nepal and 200,000 euros to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, supported the inter-institutional UN working group on violence against women with 150,000 euros and the UNFPA/UNICEF programme to combat female genital mutilation in Southern Africa with 100,000 euros.

3. Fighting Racism

On 28 November, the EU Member States’ Ministers of Justice adopted the **Framework Decision on Combating Racism and Xenophobia**. The central element of this Council Decision is the ban on public incitement to violence or hatred directed against a group of persons or a member of such a group defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent or national or ethnic origin. According to this Framework Decision, Member States are to harmonise their individual legal and administrative provisions for crimes with racist or xenophobic motivation. In future minimum standards for the criminal prosecution of the dissemination of racist or xenophobe statements will be harmonised in a mandatory manner across Europe.

At the 61st UNGA (2006), member states decided to hold a **review conference for the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism**, to assess the implementation of the proposals adopted at the World Conference. The preparatory committee established by the Human Rights Council dealt primarily with organisational issues and the agenda for the review conference to be held in Geneva from 20 to 24 April 2009.

4. Protection of Minorities

The establishment of a body dedicated to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities within the Human Rights Council and the protection of the rights of minorities has been a major concern of Austria. The **Forum on Minority Issues**, established on Austria’s initiative, convenes annually in Geneva and is charged with defining actions to promote the further implementation of the Declaration on Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted by the UNGA in 1992. The priority topic to be addressed by the Forum changes every year and always has to relate to minorities. The Forum’s first meeting, held on 15 and 16 December, was dedicated to the topic of Minorities and the Right to Education and content was prepared by the HRC’s independent expert on minority issues.
Gay McDougall. Over 200 participants including representatives from states
and international organisations, NGOs and experts on minority issues took
part on an equal footing. In her annual report to be submitted to the HRC in
March 2009, Gay McDougall will report on the recommendations prepared
by the Forum.

5. Internally Displaced Persons

For more than ten years, the protection of internally displaced persons has
been one of the priorities of Austria’s human rights policy. At the Human
Rights Council’s sixth meeting, the resolution to renew the mandate of the
Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Dis-
placed Persons, introduced by Austria, was adopted by consensus thus ena-ling Walter Kälin, who currently holds this mandate, to continue his work
until 2010. In exercising his mandate Special Representative Kälin paid
visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Georgia, Honduras, Kenya, the
Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and
Timor-Leste during which he emphasised the importance of respecting the
rights of internally displaced persons, inter alia regarding accommodation,
an adequate standard of living, health care, education, safety and security as
well as sustainable peace.

Austria supported the preparation of the manual “Protecting Internally Dis-
placed Persons: A Manual for Law and Policymakers”.

6. Human Rights Education

On 10 December, the UNGA proclaimed the year 2009 International Year of
Human Rights Learning with the objective of strengthening the promotion
and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms including the
right to development.

The manual on human rights education entitled “Understanding Human
Rights”, which was made available by Austria, is a tool that is used world-
wide. It found special recognition in the report prepared by the Alliance of
Civilisations. So far the manual has been translated into fifteen languages
and is used in the European Regional Master’s Programme for Human Rights
and Democratisation in Sarajevo and the European Master’s Programme for
Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice. The Arab version was pre-
sented at the Dialogue Conference, held between the EU and the League of
Arab States in Vienna from 17 to 19 December. The training manual is avail-
able online from the website of the European Training and Research Centre
for Human Rights and Democracy (ETC) and is therefore accessible to the
general public.
Priorities

7. International Humanitarian Law

At the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent held in 2007, the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Austrian Red Cross committed themselves to organising events dealing with current international humanitarian law topics. In this spirit, a seminar on A Legal Black Hole – the War against Terror, Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law was held in Vienna on 15 September 2008 dealing with the topic of human rights and international humanitarian law in the context of fighting terrorism.

On 24 November, a conference was held in Saint Petersburg to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the oldest disarmament treaty in the world, the Saint Petersburg Declaration Renouncing the Use, in Time of War, of Explosive Projectiles Under 400 Grammes Weight, banning so-called dum-dum bullets. At this conference, the Vice President of the Austrian Federal Council, Susanne Neuwirth stressed the import role played by the Conventions on Anti-Personnel Mines and Cluster Munitions.
H. The Humanitarian Dimension in International Relations

I. Migration and Refugee Issues

1. Migration and Refugee Movements

Alongside other causes like political conflicts, economic instability, global economic, demographic and social disparities as well as better travel and communication opportunities, environmental destruction and climate change play an increasingly important role in triggering migration. In 2008, UNHCR provided protection and assistance to almost 31.7 million people: refugees and people in refugee-like situations, asylum seekers, people who returned to their home countries, stateless and internally displaced persons. According to estimates, the total number of refugees and people in refugee-like situations has reached about 37.4 million people worldwide.

The second meeting of the Global Forum of Migration and Development, held in Manila from 27 to 30 October, was dedicated to the topic of “Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development.” The topics discussed dealt particularly with ways and means to disrupt the spiral of increasing restrictions on legal opportunities for migration and growing illegal and irregular migration in order to improve the situation of migrants in both the countries of origin and in destination countries. At the summit of the EU and its Mediterranean partner countries, held in Paris on 13 July, a Joint Declaration was adopted stipulating that legal migration is to be facilitated and interactions between migration and development are to be promoted (see also Chapter A.VI.7.3.).

2. Migration and Refugee Policy in Austria

In its refugee and migration policy, Austria places emphasis on a comprehensive approach, which takes political, human rights and development policy aspects into account. Although Austria also feels the impact of migration from the Mediterranean area, it is mainly affected by East-West migration. At EU level, Austria supports the global approach which takes account of migration flows via both the eastern and western Mediterranean as well as those via East and South East Europe. Austria also contributes financial, human and material resources to the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX).

On 3 December, the European Commission, in implementing the European Strategy on Asylum and the European Pact on Immigration and Asylum presented proposals for the amendment of the Reception Conditions Directive,
the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation (fingerprint comparison to ensure the effective application of the Dublin Regulation). The proposals made by the European Commission aim to enhance the overall effectiveness of the EU’s asylum system. Austria has supported the establishment of a common European asylum system for quite some time.

In total, 12,809 applications for asylum were submitted in Austria in 2008. This corresponds to an increase of 7.45 per cent over the previous year. The number of asylum procedures dealt with conclusively totalled 14,862, of which 3,512 were recognised and 7,748 rejected. The remaining proceedings were discontinued or became irrelevant or the applications were withdrawn or dismissed. The most common country of origin was Russia with 3,436 applications for asylum, followed by Afghanistan (1,365), Kosovo (883), Serbia (819), Nigeria (535), Georgia (513), Iraq (494), Turkey (418), Somalia (392) and Armenia (361).

3. The International Organization for Migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded in 1951 as the Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) to provide care and assistance to refugees and displaced persons in Europe in the period after the Second World War. IOM promotes a humane, fair and well-regulated migration policy and sees its main task today as supporting migrants and governments in coping with migration processes. Being the major international organisation in the field of migration issues, IOM is active in 134 states, employs about 6,900 people worldwide and has 125 member states, including all EU Member States.

The Vienna IOM Office also serves as the National Contact Point Austria of the European Migration Network, which was set up by the European Commission in 2003 and cooperates closely with the relevant institutions in Austria.

II. International Drug Control

Drug abuse remains a global challenge. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) seeks to address all aspects of drug abuse – cultivation, production, trade and consumption – and criminal side effects by applying a set of targeted measures designed to reduce both supply and demand. Austria supports the United Nations’ efforts in fostering international cooperation based on the principles adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) of Illicit Drugs in 1998, with a particular focus on the necessity of pursuing a well-balanced approach towards drugs based on human rights. The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) is the leading body under the UNGASS process launched in 1998. In the lead-
up to the 51st CND the tenth High-Level Meeting of EU/LAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism was held in Vienna on 4 and 5 March. This meeting brought together 138 experts from 43 states as well as representatives from the European Commission, UNODC, OAS and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EUMCDDA). Austria played a major role in the preparation of the “Hofburg Declaration”.

At the 51st CND, held in March, the measures taken by the member states were evaluated and five working groups established to achieve the targets set at the 20th UNGASS. At the 51st CND, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa pointed out that the global drug problem was contained but not solved. The adoption of 21 resolutions at the 51st CND is an expression of the importance member states attach to the drug problem.

The topic of HIV/AIDS also remains of great significance for the work of UNODC: on the one hand, intravenous drug abuse represents the main source of transmission of this immunodeficiency disease in many regions of the world such as Eastern Europe, Russia and South-East Asia, whilst on the other hand, HIV/AIDS is spreading increasingly in prisons. The 51st CND again underlined the increased occurrence of HIV/AIDS along the opium trading routes and confirmed the role played by UNODC as the leading unit among the UN Institutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The 6th Paris Pact Policy Consultative Group Meeting, which deals with key issues under the Paris Pact Initiative, convened in Vienna on 15 and 16 December. The Paris Pact of 2003 is an initiative aimed at harmonising the fight by member states against the spread of Afghan heroin from the production sites along transit routes and through to consumers. Furthermore, the initiative pursues the objective of establishing consultation mechanisms for the affected states and/or neighbouring states as well as collecting and analysing data in the database for donor coordination (Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism, ADAM).

The Standing Committee of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) analysed the global supply of and demand for narcotics and psychotropic substances for medical purposes and defined the respective quota for each individual country.

III. International Crime Prevention

In the field of crime prevention and criminal justice, Austria also pursues a strategy aimed at strengthening the work of UNODC. Particularly within the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) Austria has thus advocated a strengthening of the Secretariat and a constant expansion of UNODC’s mandate within the defined framework.

The 17th session of the CCPCJ, held from 14 to 18 April, focused on the topic of violence against women. Further topics on the meeting’s agenda were
criminal justice, combating corruption, terrorism prevention, transnational and organised crime. As part of its dedicated efforts to promote the combat and prevention of terrorism under the UN, Austria succeeded in having this topic included in the agenda of the 12th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice due to take place in Brazil in 2010 and thus strengthened the UNODC’s Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB), co-established by Austria. Under the UN-wide burden-sharing mechanism, the TPB has successfully fulfilled its mandate in the field of combating terrorism and has developed into one of the best-functioning UN entities to offer technical assistance for building up counter-terrorism capacities. The system of counter-terrorism burden-sharing between New York (political) and Vienna (technical) has proved to be successful.

The biennial review of the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was undertaken at the 63rd UNGA. A resolution, which was adopted by consensus, confirms its validity and stresses the UN member states’ responsibility with respect to its integrated implementation in all its aspects, the importance of international cooperation and the central role played by the UN in combating terrorism. The review was preceded in 2007 by the Second Vienna Terrorism Symposium, which dealt with this strategy and was attended by high-level UN representatives. Austria supported the implementation by launching initiatives in the fields of rule of law, human rights and human security, development cooperation and dialogue among cultures. Austria is one of the largest donors to the UNODC programme aimed at building up the states’ legal capacities and in this context promoted specific seminars for developing countries. These included, for instance, the participation of Small Island States in the high-level UN Experts’ Seminar on the Criminal Law Aspects of Countering Maritime Terrorism in the Light of Relevant Universal Instruments, held in Vienna from 14 to 16 July. Furthermore, Austria made a voluntary contribution to funding the activities launched by the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), established to support member states and coordinate UN players with a view to implementing the strategy. An information system, which is open to all CTITF members, is currently being prepared in order to improve both coordination of and assistance by the various UN organisations active in this field.

Human trafficking is increasingly developing into a global problem which can only be countered in the international context. According to an ILO study, 2.4 million people, particularly women and children, fall victim to human trafficking every year. Austria supports the projects and events organised by UNODC in the field of human trafficking. The highlight in this context was the Vienna Forum to Fight Human Trafficking organised from 13 to 15 February under the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (UN GIFT). The meeting was attended by some 1,200 experts from 116 countries and personalities from the film and music industry.
The approach pursued by Austria in combating human trafficking covers coordination at national level, prevention, victim protection, criminal prosecution and international cooperation. Austria ratified all relevant international agreements and, moreover, established the **Task Force on Human Trafficking** in 2004. The Task Force, which is chaired by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, is mandated with coordinating all relevant Austrian activities, including the sharing of information, to enable identification of trends at an early stage and strengthening of cooperation among all stakeholders. In the context of its activities, the Task Force dedicates special attention to the protection of children. Children were also the topic of a national conference entitled “Children are Not a Commodity – Joining Forces Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children”, held in Vienna on 2 October. Apart from the activities launched on a national basis, the Federal Ministry undertakes dedicated efforts aimed at combating human trafficking in more than 100 countries. In this spirit, all Austrian representations abroad were called upon to contribute actively to combating human trafficking; moreover, numerous projects launched under the Austrian Development Cooperation aim to promote the rights of victims of human trafficking. In 2007, within the context of the national measures taken to combat human trafficking, Austria adopted a **National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking** covering the period until 2008. Negotiations were held in 2008 preparing a decision by the Austrian Federal Government on the Second National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking covering the period from 2009 to 2011.

**IV. The International Criminal Court**

The International Criminal Court (ICC), based in The Hague, is a permanent and independent court established by the Rome Statute of 1998. Its jurisdiction currently includes the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and severe war crimes, provided that they were committed after the Rome Statute entered into force on 1 July 2002, either on the territory of a State Party or by a national of a State Party. In certain exceptional cases the UNSC has the opportunity to refer a situation to the ICC even if the state in question is not a State Party to the Rome Statute. The Rome Statute, to which 108 States are currently party, sets out that the ICC is based on the principle of complementary jurisdiction. This means that the Court will only act if the affected states, which are primarily responsible for carrying out investigations or prosecutions, are either unwilling or unable to investigate and/or deal with the crimes.

The following **situations** are currently pending before the ICC: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Central African Republic – and following referral by UNSC resolution 1593 (2005) – Darfur/Sudan. The individual cases are at different stages, with the execution of the arrest warrants issued against senior leaders of the LRA, especially Joseph Kony (Uganda situation),
and against Ahmad Harun and Ali Kushayb (Sudan situation), still being outstanding. The focus of interest was on the application for the warrant of arrest for Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir filed by ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo on 14 July, as this is the first time that the ICC has taken action against a head of state in office.

The seventh session of the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, which was held in The Hague from 14 to 22 November, dealt with the preparatory process for the first Review Conference scheduled for 2010. In terms of content, the most important item on the agenda of the Review Conference will be the question as to whether and in what form the ICC will be able to also exercise jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. Participants decided on Kampala as the venue for the conference, not least because all current cases before the ICC relate to Africa. Furthermore, the Assembly took substantial decisions regarding the construction of the ICC’s permanent premises and adopted the budget for 2009. Christian Wenaweser, from Liechtenstein, is the first European to take the chair of the Assembly of the States Parties.

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 prison sentences and actively supports the establishment of an international law database under the Legal Tools Project initiated by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC. It is composed of electronic legal services in international criminal law that aim to network and interlink criminal law and procedural international criminal law information with the relevant court decisions and informed commentaries.
I. Multilateral Economic Policy

I. The World Trade Organization

Within the World Trade Organization (WTO), the key dossiers of agriculture and industrial goods play a central role for reaching an agreement in the negotiations on the Doha Development Agenda (DDA). It remains imperative in this context to strike a balance between a reduction of trade-distorting national subsidies and/or the reduction of import tariffs for agricultural goods on the one hand and cutting tariffs for non-agricultural market access (NAMA) on the other. Although it has not yet been possible to overcome these conflicts of objectives in the “magic triangle” between the USA, Europe/Japan and the developing countries (particularly the emerging economies of Brazil, China and India), substantial progress has been made.

In February and in May, the chairs of the negotiation groups on the two key dossiers presented revised texts as a basis for future compromise. Especially the version of the text on agriculture presented in May, led to greater rapprochement on decisive issues. Encouraged by this development, WTO Director General Pascal Lamy invited members to Geneva for a meeting of ministers representing all interests in the negotiations in order to reach an agreement on agriculture and NAMA modalities.

From 20 to 30 July, some 35 ministers from key countries tried to come to a well-balanced agreement. Yet, in spite of far-reaching agreement, the endeavour was eventually thwarted by a topic which had previously received little attention – the issue of protective measures for developing countries in the agriculture key dossier. Agreement could not be reached between India and China on the one hand and the USA on the other. Moreover, the topic of cotton subsidies, which is of great interest particularly to the African producers, was not addressed. In the final session, WTO members unanimously agreed to continue the DDA as much had already been achieved and a comprehensive solution was considered within reach.

After the summer break, attempts at achieving further harmonisation of views on the remaining open issues were complicated by the approaching U.S. elections. The clear commitment expressed at the Washington G20 meeting, held on 15 November following the outbreak of the global financial crisis, for some time nurtured the hope that a breakthrough could be achieved at a further ministerial meeting in December. But as the actual progress made at the negotiations could not keep pace with the expectations and another failure was deemed to pose a risk for the Multilateral System, Director General Lamy eventually decided against holding another meeting. However, with the presentation of the revised texts, the status of negotiations and particularly the progress made at the ministerial meeting in July was documented.

In view of the dominant role played by the negotiation topics of agriculture and industrial goods, the other DDA dossiers took something of a backseat.
While the topic of Services was dealt with at the ministerial meeting in July, only limited progress was made in the area of Rules on topics such as trade facilitation, anti-dumping/countervailing duty and fishery subsidies.

The “Aid for Trade“ initiative, which was launched by the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Hong Kong in 2005 and is more or less decoupled from the Doha Round, was further developed with the main focus on implementation. The WTO’s annual Aid For Trade Global Review, originally scheduled for November, was postponed to June 2009. One of the Initiative’s most important instruments is the Enhanced Integrated Framework for trade-related assistance to least developed countries, which came into force in October. Ukraine and Cape Verde joined the WTO in the first half of the year, which increased the organisation’s membership to 153. Currently, accession procedures are ongoing for 29 countries. Very good progress was made by Montenegro, which will in all probability join the WTO in 2009. After a temporary stagnation in the accession negotiation process, talks with Serbia got underway again, Russia’s accession is stagnating and the Georgia conflict led to further complications in this respect. Austria’s Permanent Representative to the OECD, Wolfgang Petritsch, chairs the accession working group for Bhutan.

II. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

The substantive work undertaken by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is performed by some 200 committees and working groups, which generally meet (bi)annually in Paris. Austria holds the chair in six of these working groups. The main topic dealt with in the first six months was inflation, followed by the financial and economic crisis. Cooperation between the OECD and non-member countries has also grown in importance.

1. International Economy and Finances

The development of crude oil prices and the substantial increase in energy prices already began curbing the potential for growth at the beginning of the year. In autumn, the financial crisis hit the entire OECD area and the Organization was forced to undertake drastic downward revisions for both its own and many of its member countries’ forecasts. Based on many different multilateral initiatives aimed at stabilising the financial system, launched for instance by the IMF and the Financial Stability Forum (FSF), the OECD promptly prepared its “strategic response” to the financial and economic crisis. Being a multilateral economic organisation, which regularly makes recommendations on structural and economic policy issues, the OECD is playing a pivotal role in analysing causes and preparing solutions. Alongside
the currently ongoing analysis of the impacts of the financial crisis on the real economy, the OECD’s current activities focus on devising transparent framework conditions and stepping-up regulations for the financial markets, although it had in the past welcomed steps towards liberalisation, particularly in the financial market sector. In its tax segment, the Action Plan prepared by the G-20 refers to the work undertaken by the OECD.

2. Austria’s Priorities within the OECD

Together with the Permanent Delegation of Austria to the OECD, the Federal Ministries and the Social Partners, the Austrian Federal Chancellery launched a process aimed at defining concrete priorities. The long-term priorities, in which Austria intends to step up its pro-active involvement within the OECD in the forthcoming years, are education and knowledge-based society, selected economic areas, the social system and the labour market, climate/efficient use of resources and governance. Austria’s short and medium-term priorities are thus the financial market crisis, educational reform and migration. Together with the OECD, the Federal Ministry for Health and the Federal Chancellery organised a conference on the health system in Austria, at which topics including health expenditure, health care and potential approaches to reforming the Austrian system were discussed. In July, a working session for capital yield tax experts was convened at the Federal Chancellery.

3. OECD Council at Ministerial Level

The main topics at the Meeting of the OECD Economic and Finance Ministers in Paris on 4 and 5 June were climate change and financial reform. The OECD Council at Ministerial Level agreed on a contribution scale which puts small and medium-sized member countries at a disadvantage.

Representatives of the five candidate countries (Chile, Estonia, Israel, Russia and Slovenia) as well as of those five countries with whom an Enhanced Engagement was adopted in 2007 (Brazil, India, Indonesia, People’s Republic of China, South Africa) participated in all of the Council’s sessions, except for the session dealing with the agenda item Management Affairs.

4. Specific Surveys of Austria

In December, a first mission visited Austria to carry out the Economic Survey of Austria with a focus on education policy. In February, a Survey of Austrian Energy Policy was carried out by the International Energy Agency (IEA). In spite of the huge efforts and the considerable success in the fields of energy efficiency and renewable energy identified by the IEA, Austria still faces major challenges in the three main areas of energy policy (safeguarding
energy supply security, economic development and environmental protection). In 2008/2009, the Austrian Development Cooperation will be subject to a multi-level review procedure by representatives of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and its member states. The preparations for a first-time Survey of Austrian Regulatory Policies have been launched.

5. Selected Publications

The comprehensive study on “Growing Unequal? Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries” gives an overview of the development of income disparities and income poverty in the OECD countries over the last 20 years and analyses potential causes.

The annual report “Economic Policy Reforms – Going for Growth”, contains recommendations on necessary structural reform for each OECD member country and the EU.

The central issue discussed in the 2008 Employment Outlook is the finding that although labour market reform has actually increased labour force participation in general, certain groups like women and people with a migration background are still being put at a disadvantage in the labour market.

The 2008 International Migration Outlook specifically explores the topic of temporary labour migration.

The 2008 edition of “Education at a Glance“ enables countries to see themselves in the light of other countries’ performance in the field of education and offers analyses of their respective development. After the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which analyses the science knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds, the OECD members approved another project in the educational sector - the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC).

The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2008-2017 deals with the question of which factors will influence the prices for agricultural commodities and agricultural policies in the coming years. The report presents a plausible scenario for the evolution of prices on the agricultural markets and analyses the impacts of high food prices on the poorest countries.

The OECD Environmental Outlook to 2030 outlines the opportunities for and affordability of tackling the key environmental challenges we face today including climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and the health impacts of pollution and warns about the high consequential costs of policy inaction.

The annual World Energy Outlook prepared by the IEA, which is part of the OECD, provides detailed forecasts for the various energy sources and predicts an increase in global demand for primary energy by 1.6 per cent annually by 2030.
6. International Energy Agency

At the Japan G8 Summit, the International Energy Agency (IEA) called for a “global energy revolution” and warned against the risk of potential production problems caused by a discontinuation of investments and the reduction of annual oil production volumes. The IEA also stressed that measures aimed at promoting sustainable sources of energy and energy efficient technologies were necessary in order to be able to guarantee economic upswing, energy security and to meet the climate goals. Poland became the 28th member of the IEA.
J. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Much has been achieved in recent years on the basis of the goals defined at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992: numerous conventions and legal instruments have been negotiated and ratified relating, for instance, to climate, biodiversity, desertification and dangerous chemicals, important principles of the Rio Declaration have been integrated in national and European legislation, and the aim of sustainable development increasingly determines political action. One of the major challenges that remain on the agenda is the elaboration of an international agreement for the time after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol in the year 2012.

I. Follow-up to the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

The sixteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) convened in New York from 5 to 16 May. The top items on the meeting’s agenda were the topics of the third implementation cycle of the Johannesburg Agenda: agriculture, rural development, draught, desertification and Africa’s sustainable development. Another subject of intensive deliberation was the food and financial crisis, which will feature as a major topic on the agenda of the CSD-17 meeting in 2009.

II. The United Nations Environment Programme

The 10th Special Session of the UNEP Governing Council was held at the same time as the Global Ministerial Environment Forum Event (GMEF) in Monte Carlo from 20 to 22 February. At this meeting participants welcomed the Environment Programme’s new medium-term strategy, which will contribute substantially to strengthening UNEP. Another topic of the environment ministers’ discussions was the role played by UNEP in combating climate change.

III. Global Environmental Protection Agreements

At the fourth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety held in Bonn (Germany) from 12 to 16 May, the parties agreed to elaborate within the next two years a legally binding instrument governing liability and redress for damage resulting from transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms.

Bonn was also the venue for the ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from 19 to 30 May.
The conference decided on the necessity of sustainable production and use of biofuels and to enhance collaboration with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with respect to impacts of climate change on biodiversity. Based on a clear roadmap, the Parties to the Convention are to elaborate and adopt within the next two years the international regime on access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the their utilisation.

The third meeting of the Parties to the **Aarhus Convention**, which celebrated its tenth anniversary, took place in Riga (Latvia) on 11 to 13 June. The Riga Declaration adopted at this meeting summarises the achievements and challenges in applying and further developing the Convention. The most important result to come out of the conference was the adoption of a Strategic Plan for 2009–2014 outlining the following goals: full implementation of the Convention, increase of the number of Parties to the Convention and further development of the Convention. A working group on public participation was also set up.

The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the **Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal** was held in Nusa Dua (Indonesia) from 23 to 27 June. The ministers present at the meeting stressed the impacts of hazardous waste particularly on the poorest populations. In connection with the work on the strategic re-orientation of the Convention, it was decided that efforts aimed at putting into effect the amendment to the Convention relating to the export ban on hazardous waste be stepped-up in the forthcoming years. Furthermore, it was decided to follow the recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the waste and chemicals conventions.

The sixtieth annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission (**IWC**) was held in Santiago de Chile from 23 to 27 June. This was the first meeting at which EU coordination took place. Representing the interests of Greenland, Denmark introduced a proposal for a strike limit of ten humpback whales annually, which was eventually thwarted due to rejection by all other EU Member States.

The Parties to the **Rotterdam Convention** on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade convened in Rome from 20 to 24 October. The States Parties to this Convention also confirmed the recommendations on enhancing cooperation and coordination among the waste and chemicals conventions. The inclusion of the chemicals chrysotile asbestos and endosulfan in the list of chemicals subject to the Prior Informed Consent Procedure was again adjourned, while the dangerous pesticide tributyltin was included in the list.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (**UNCCD**) is increasingly focusing on the problem of soil and land degradation leading to the inability by populations in disadvantaged areas to sustain possible self-
sufficiency. The momentum created by the adoption of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the UNCCD for 2008–2018 at the 2007 conference of the States Parties was continued at the Review Conference held in Istanbul from 3 to 14 November.

The 20th Meeting of the Parties to the **Montreal Protocol** on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer convened in Doha (Qatar) from 16 to 20 November. After the States Parties had committed themselves at the 2007 Meeting of the Parties to accelerate the phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and to advance the phase-out date by ten years for developing countries, the dominant topic of this year’s deliberations was replenishing the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol to assist the developing countries in implementing their phase-out projects. Another important course was set for the Protocol by the adoption of decisions enabling the launching of the first projects to collect and destroy substances that deplete the ozone layer. A dialogue on alternatives to ozone-depleting substances with highly negative implications for climate change will be held with a view to creating synergies between the Montreal Protocol and the Kyoto Protocol.

The 14th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) and the fourth Conference of the Parties to the **Kyoto Protocol** met in parallel in Poznan (Poland) from 1 to 12 December. Deliberations focused on the continuation of work on an international agreement for the time after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol at the end of 2012. Stock was also taken of what had been achieved thus far in this context and agreement was reached on a working programme for 2009. While progress was achieved on some technical issues and the operationalisation of the Adaptation Fund, no agreement could be reached on the question of extending the share of proceeds to assist in meeting the costs of adaptation to Joint Implementation projects and emissions trading.
K. International Cultural Policy

I. Priorities

The goals and underlying principles of international cultural policy can best be described as a “future workshop for modern European and foreign policy”. The policy serves as the basis for a pro-active dialogue, creating an atmosphere of trust and fostering partnerships to enable better understanding of and greater respect for cultural differences. Thus active and dedicated international cultural policy plays a special role on Austria’s foreign policy agenda. In order to put this concept of international cultural policy into practice, Austria draws on a comprehensive network of 30 Cultural Forums, 54 Austria Libraries (Österreich-Bibliotheken), nine Austria Institutes (Österreich Institute), special cooperation offices in Lviv, Sarajevo and Washington, D.C. as well as the Austrian embassies and consulates general.

In support of Austrian foreign policy initiatives, there was particular focus on the countries bordering the river Danube and the Western Balkan states. An innovative event format was launched with the introduction of the “flow” programme, a three-day festival involving young artists and scientists from ten Danube region countries in Novi Sad, which opened up a new platform for communication and discourse on cross-border cooperation. The role played by cultural projects and activities launched in Serbia was also enhanced by the opening of the Austrian Cultural Forum (CF) based in the city centre of Belgrade.

A special highlight on the international cultural agenda was the “scene: österreich“ festival including events organised throughout the German state of North Rhine Westphalia which featured the first large-scale presentation of modern Austrian art in Germany. The international attention attracted by the European Football Championship “UEFA EURO 2008” held in Austria and Switzerland was also used to put the spotlight on cultural activities of young Austrian artists by showing the video clip series “eleven minutes” at the beginning of public screening broadcasts abroad.

1. Selected International Cultural Policy Projects

1.1. Music

Austria’s image abroad is strongly influenced by its rich musical history. This long-standing tradition continues in the classical sector with further highlights in the fields of contemporary music, jazz, world music, pop, rock and electronic music.

The “New Austrian Sound of Music“, a programme for up-and-coming young artists was continued and a new edition prepared for 2009/2010. Another priority in this context was the promotion of women in music. A publication
Priorities

on women in music in Austria is being prepared involving representatives of conservatories, music colleges, singers and musicians, event organisers, managers and organisations active in the field of music.

Attention paid over recent years to “exile music” continued to grow. Targeted support was given to festivals and musicians who performed ostracised, defamed or prohibited works by exiled composers for the first time. Events organised in this context included, for instance, the “Les voix étouffées” concert series in Paris, the “Festival Musiques Interdites” in Marseille, the concert given by Marco Albrizio and Irene Wallner on the occasion of the “giornata della memoria” in Rome, “Elysium – between two continents” where works by Viktor Ullmann were played in Berlin, the Merlin Ensemble in Rome and Washington, D.C., the commemorative concert for Alfred Uhl and a song cycle with Iván Paley in Bogotá (Columbia). The “European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008” was also included in the planning of projects. Many concerts performed abroad lived up to this title, such as the tour of the “divan tulip“ band with ”Transbalkan“ in Serbia, concerts given in Belgrade and Novi Sad by the Chief Cantor of the Jewish Community in Vienna, Shmuel Barzilai, concerts by the Austro-Palestinian musician Marwan Abado in Damascus, the “Moving Culture” jazz festival at which ”Parov Stelar“ and the ””Tschuschenkapelle“ performed in Tirana (Albania), the “Grenzenlos“ ensemble in South China, the ”Flamenca“ band at the Korba street festival in Heliopolis (Egypt), concerts at the minorities festival “Prekomeja – 2 Wochen der grenzüberschreitenden Zusammenarbeit” (Prekomeja – 2 weeks of cross-border cooperation) in Slovenia, the “Texta” hip-hop group performing “Europe-Kenya – Unity in Diversity” in Nairobi together with Ukooflani, Joris Dudli in Manaus (Brazil), Sigi Finkel & African Heart at the “Jazz à Carthage” festival, the musician/DJ Dunkelbunt/Ulf Lindemann at the “Balkanology” festival in Cape Town (South Africa), to name but a few.

Contemporary art was performed inter alia at the “Ring-Ring Festival” in Belgrade, by Jenny Lin in Washington, D.C., Felician Honsig-Erlenburg and ensemble in Paris, by the Klangforum Wien at the “New Music 2008” art music festival in Stockholm and by Manon-Liu Winter in Beijing.

The “Sounding Jerusalem” festival, founded and organised by Erich Oskar Huetter, which took place at venues in the Palestinian territories as well as in East and West Jerusalem, was supported for the third time. The “Spirit of Europe” orchestra and the Vienna Artis Quartett also performed at this festival.

1.2. Literature, Dance und Theatre

The focus of events in the fields of literature and theatre was on contemporary works and productions.

The great interest which exists in Austrian literature is expressed by the translations of books by Austrian authors and the large number of readings, book-
signing tours, literature festivals and workshops in which Austrian authors participated in 2008. An albeit small selection of such Austrian authors includes Dimitré Dinev, Lilian Faschinger, Barbara Frischmuth, Arno Geiger, Thomas Glavinic, Wolf Haas, Peter Handke, Robert Menasse, Richard Obermayr, Bernhard Strobel, Andrea Winkler, Josef Winkler and Vladimir Vertlib. Productions of Austrian plays were shown on international stages and Austrian theatre groups were also increasingly invited to give guest appearances, showing their own productions at theatres and/or festivals abroad. Demand was high for well-known dramatic stage works by Thomas Bernhard, Elfriede Jelinek and Arthur Schnitzler but also for interpretations and staged readings of works by young playwrights and dramatists like Christoph Dostal and Kathrin Röggla. In the lead-up to the 20th anniversary of Thomas Bernhard’s death, funding was made available for the translation, for instance, into Portuguese and Ukrainian and the subsequent staging of a number of his works. At the “scene: österreich” festival in North Rhine-Westphalia in spring, Austria as a host country was represented in the fields of theatre and dance. Works entitled “Über Tiere” (on animals) by 2nd nature and “gold extra” by Black Box as well as productions by Chris Haring/Liquid Loft and Cie Laroque/Helene Weinzierl were shown at the festival.

The global involvement and the success of Austria’s young dancing scene is particularly noteworthy. Austrian artists gave individual performances, were invited to participate in festivals like the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre and the International Performing Arts Festival in Yerevan (Armenia). Furthermore, workshops conducted by Austrian artists were increasingly in demand internationally. The groups whose performances received support in 2008 included Cie Willi Dorner, Editta Braun Company, Dans Kias and Superamas.

The “Talking about Borders” drama competition held in Croatia and initiated by Christian Papke was continued. The competition’s winning entry by Croatian author Goran Ferčec entitled “Instructions for performing a play on the subject of H, a letter to Heiner Müller, notes” was presented at the Vienna Volkstheater.

1.3. Fine and Visual Arts

Design was the key topic at presentations organised inter alia by the “Regional Partnership and Platform Culture – Central Europe”, where Central European design was presented under the heading of “Laboratorium der Wirklichkeit” (laboratory of reality) at the Cité du Design in St. Etienne within the framework of the French EU-Presidency. The Austrian section of the event was curated by the special interest group on design and exhibits by EOOS (industrial design) and Dejana Kabiljo (concept design). The travelling exhibition “GD2D + PD3D – Fresh Air by Pure Austrian Design”, which unites graphic and product design elements and was curated by Juland Barcelona-Vienna
and the bkm design working group, was put together for the Austrian Cultural Forums and representations abroad. This project was launched at the Slovakian design centre in Bratislava. Another new element featuring on the exhibition programme is the project “Die unbekannten Europäer” (the unknown Europeans) designed by the author Karl-Markus Gauß and the photographer Kurt Kaindl, which was first shown in Belgrade and Ljubljana.

Of the numerous exhibitions organised by the CF, the project “Under Pain of Death” by the CF in New York requires special mention. It dealt with the global role played by capital punishment and how it is reflected in contemporary art.

For a period of two weeks the facade of the synagogue at Neudeggergasse in Vienna, destroyed in 1938, was shown in the Parque Thays in Buenos Aires as part of a project entitled “Verlorenne Nachbarn, Buenos Aires – Wien 2008” (“Lost Neighbours, Buenos Aires – Vienna 2008”) which also involved numerous events to commemorate the Pogrom Night of 1938 and the Austrian-Jewish emigration to Argentina.

The CF in Belgrade participated in the October Salon of the City of Belgrade, where works by Valie Export, Eduard Freudmann and Oliver Ressler were shown.

Furthermore, 16 Vorarlberg artists who had been selected by the Palais Liechtenstein – Forum für zeitgenössische Kunst (Palais Liechtenstein – Forum for Contemporary Art) designed a group exhibition in China entitled “Beyond Great Walls and Little Fences” at the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and the DeShan Art Space in Beijing.

1.4. Film

The Ministry for European and International Affairs again enabled Austrian filmmakers to participate in international film festivals by covering their travel expenses in 2008. Austrian representations organised or co-organised Austrian Film Weeks in cities including Barcelona, Bern, Krakow, Lisbon, London, Madrid, Moscow, São Paulo, Tel Aviv and Vilnius.

The audience attending the monthly showings of Austrian films at the Cultural Forums in Cairo, New York, Prague, Tehran, Warsaw and Washington, D.C. has increased substantially. A number of film projects were realised in cooperation with the local Austrian Development Cooperation coordination offices in Kampala (Uganda), Maputo (Mozambique) and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso).

The number of Austrian film productions presented abroad also increased, with some 80 “Austrian Film Days” events organised internationally. In addition, Austria took part in around 50 “European Film Days” organised by the EU. Besides movies, experimental films and animated cartoons, docu-
mentary films have also come to play an increasingly important role in this context.

1.5. Academic and Scientific Events
The majority of contributions in the field of science related to humanities, followed by science of art, cultural studies, political science and social science. Topics relating to natural science, law, technology and theology were discussed at academic lectures.

2. International Cultural Policy Initiatives
In connection with the focus on the Balkans under the heading “Culture Matters”, the international translation programme TRADUKI was initiated in cooperation with KulturKontakt Austria, the German Foreign Office, the Goethe Institut, the Pro Helvetia foundation and the S. Fischer foundation. The goal of the programme is to use both fiction and non-fiction to overcome the language barriers between literature written in German and in the South East European languages, thus promoting greater mutual understanding. A special coordination office was set up in Sarajevo to manage this civil society project with a European policy component.

The relevant planning processes concerning important anniversaries to be celebrated in 2009 were also launched. One such event is the 140th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Austria and Japan, which will be commemorated with an “Austria-Japan Year” featuring a range of celebratory events between tradition and innovation. Apart from classical programmes, there will be an emphasis on the presentation of contemporary art, conveying an innovative picture of Austria in Japan. Another highlight to be celebrated in 2009 is the anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, which is to be used to raise awareness, especially among younger generations, of contemporary history and the enormous progress made in the history of European development in the last 20 years. Under the heading of “Geteilt | Geeint” (separated I united) a large number of events is being organised in Austria and in the countries of an increasingly united Europe.

The designation of Linz and Vilnius as European Capitals of Culture 2009 contributes to involving Linz and the Province of Upper Austria more closely into Austria’s international cultural policy and has also led to closer links being established between the two cities as projects from Linz have also been shown in Vilnius.

3. Grants for Cultural Projects
In order to support innovative projects with cultural policy content and establish foreign policy and international cultural policy objectives in the
Priorities

public eye, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs provides funding in the form of grants to a large number of highly diverse cultural projects. In 2008, budget funding of 415,000 euros was made available to 70 projects from the spheres of art, culture and science.

In this context, a particular focus was placed on the meeting and conference sector. The symposium organised by the Slovenian Institute of Science in Vienna entitled “Tu Felix Europa” and dealing with Central European Humanism was thus supported as well as the Austrian Architecture Days 2008 as well as the meeting “Aufbruch und Rückschlag – Das Jahr 1968 in Europa. Der Prager Frühling und sein Ende” (Awakening and setback – the year 1968 in Europe. The Prague Spring and its end), organised by the association Kulturbrücke Fratres. The meeting of the European Landscape Architecture Students Association (ELASA) entitled “at.de border”, which was held in Kleinwalsertal, focused on aspects of borderlines within individuals, society, culture, space and landscape, was also given financial support. The festivals supported by the Ministry included the “Retz Offene Grenzen” (city of Retz open borders) festival, the “2008 Jewish Culture Days” organised by the Jewish Institute for Adult Education as well as “DOYOBE! Do your best”, a modern peace project addressing a young audience organised in Salzburg. In the field of drama, funding was made available to the Brett theatre in Vienna to stage “Jan by 2 - Jan Palach and Jan Sabata; On the road to democracy in Czechoslovakia”. The “Die Besten aus dem Osten, Folge 2: Polen” (the best from the East, episode 2: Poland), a project run by the Vienna Volks-theater focusing on contemporary Polish literature, was likewise supported. Funding was granted to “Kennwort: Bergstation”, a young, innovative group of female artists from Graz for the performance of “The Playground Meridian”. In the field of music, the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, the Klangforum Wien, the Pierrot Lunaire Ensemble Wien and the Vienna Art Orchestra were granted subsidies for their tours abroad. Further funding was granted to the choir association Chorvereinigung St. Augustin for CD productions and to the Austro-Korean Philharmonic for their gala concert held in the Vienna Musikverein.

Like many other cultural institutions, the Kulturverein österreichischer Roma (cultural society of Austrian Roma) received funding for its international activities, as did the Coordinating Committee for Christian Jewish Cooperation for concerts, the Pro Oriente foundation and the Jugend Literatur Werkstatt Graz (Graz Youth Literature Workshop) for a European literature competition. Financial support was also made available to the Slovenian German-speaking cultural associations Brücken, Absteller Feld and Gottscheer Antisiedler Verein, the Croatian cultural associations Napredak and Anno 93, the Austro-Italian cultural association “mezzogiorno” and the St. George’s College Austrian School in Istanbul for its annual publication.
II. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science


Based on the existing scientific and technical agreements, new implementation programmes were agreed with Romania, Slovakia and Hungary.

A meeting of the Mixed Cultural Commission was held in Vienna on 17 and 18 April as foreseen by the cultural agreement with Bulgaria. On 2 and 3 June, a meeting of the Mixed Austro-Slovak Cultural Commission was held in Bratislava in accordance with the cultural agreement.

III. Austria Libraries

Following some 20 years of development, the Austria Libraries abroad have now become well-established platforms for intercultural dialogue that make a special contribution to overcoming the mental division of Europe into East and West. Thanks to their institutional affiliation with universities and national libraries, they are used by students, academics and instructors from the scientific realms as well as the general public.

The network of Austria Libraries abroad comprises 54 libraries in 25 countries. Besides providing conventional library services, the Austria Libraries also organise over 500 events that attract some 70,000 visitors every year. More than 180,000 people per annum use the Libraries, whose stocks have grown to around 300,000 books, 4,500 audio items, 800 CD-ROMs and 3,000 videos. Accessible via the web portal of the Austria Libraries at www.oesterreich-bibliotheken.at, the database on Austrian literature already includes...
Science, Education and Language

more than 12,000 foreign-language translations of Austrian works (Auslands-
austriaca).

Another step towards further intensifying cultural relations with Bosnia
and Herzegovina was taken in November when a new Austria Library was
opened in Banja Luka and the Austria Library in Tuzla was reopened follow-
ing renovation work.

In September, the scientific advisors to Austria Libraries from the “peripheral
centres” of the former Danube Monarchy were invited to attend a conference
on the history, reception and impact of Austrian literature in Czernovice
and Lviv (Ukraine). On the occasion of the European Year of Intercultural
Dialogue 2008, literary scholars and translators affiliated with the Austria
Libraries in Bulgaria, Hungary and Ukraine participated in a dialogue tour,
organised jointly by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture
and the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF), that took them to Bregenz,
Klagenfurt and Eisenstadt. The Austria Libraries abroad also participated in
a campaign under the heading of “Österreich liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek”
(Austria reads. Meeting point library).

With a particular focus on Austrian humanities, books were donated to social
science and German studies institutes at universities around the world, inter
alia in Azerbaijan, Croatia, Estonia, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal,
Romania, Russia, South Africa and Turkey.

IV. Science, Education and Language

1. Science and Education

1.1. Austrian Professorships and Centres for Austrian Studies Abroad

These facilities established at universities in Europe as well as in Australia,
Israel, Canada and the USA serve the purpose of initiating, deepening and
coordinating the study of Austria- and Europe-specific topics in the respec-
tive host country. Their activities also demonstrate Austria’s own intellectual
potential and stimulate academic research in the respective subject area as
well as publication of the relevant findings. Through networking with the
competent Austrian institutions, these establishments also strengthen Aus-
tria’s involvement in the international scientific, academic and cultural net-
work.

1.2. Grants and Mobility Programmes for University Studies

The Austrian Exchange Service (Österreichischer Austauschdienst, ÖAD),
which acts as the partner of the Federal Ministry for European and Interna-
tional Affairs in this regard, provides services to grant holders and adminis-
ters the various mobility programmes such as, for instance, Erasmus, bilat-

191
eral grant programmes, Austrian Development Cooperation programmes and scientific and technical cooperation programmes. The individual programmes are implemented by the Bureau for Academic Mobility and Cooperation and the National Agency for Lifelong Learning within the ÖAD. The tasks performed in this area by the Federal Ministry include coordination and information activities for both the Austrian missions abroad and foreign representations in Austria. Upon the entry into effect of the Federal Law on the Establishment of the OeAD Limited Liability Company (Bundesgesetz zur Errichtung der OeAD-Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung) on 1 January 2009, all responsibilities of the ÖAD, which was set up in 1961 and had so far been managed as an association of universities, will be transferred to the newly-established company known as the Austrian Agency of International Cooperation in the Field of Education and Science.

1.3. Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

In the commemorative year of 2008, Austria for the first time took the Chair of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF). This international institution, whose Permanent Secretariat is based in Berlin, was set up in 1998 on the initiative of Sweden with the purpose of being an international network that aims to promote Holocaust education, remembrance and research at national and international levels. Austria was admitted to the ITF in 2001. Since then the Austrian delegation has been headed by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. 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 “_erinern.at_” participate in the permanent working groups. Together with the Plenary Meeting that convenes twice a year and the Permanent Secretariat, they represent the organisation’s operational structure. Projects launched by Austria in the fields of Holocaust education, awareness-raising and research are held in high esteem within the ITF.

Due to the ITF’s flexible structure, the Chair, which rotates annually among the 26 members, plays a leading role in designing both content and organisational structures. The Austrian Chair of the ITF for the 2008/2009 period has been assumed by a delegation headed by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. The focus was placed on stabilising and strengthening the organisation’s clout in view of the challenges faced as a result of the expansion of both its activities and its membership. Other priorities defined by the Austrian Chair included enhancing the ITF’s international visibility by preparing a comprehensive web site and an information brochure, networking with other international organisations like the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE and the UN, using - on behalf of the organisation - the
diplomatic tools of influence against revisionism and to promote additions to the archive as well as expansion of its membership.

2. Language

The **Österreich Institut G.m.b.H.** (Austria Institute Ltd.) organises German language courses, supports and promotes German language instruction abroad, and cooperates with national and international organisations. It was founded in 1997 to further develop on an independent basis the German courses that are important to Austria’s international cultural policy and which had up to that time been offered at cultural institutes. Headquartered in Vienna, the organisation maintains institutes in Belgrade, Bratislava, Brno, Budapest, Krakow, Ljubljana, Rome, Warsaw and Wroclaw as well as a licensed facility in Istanbul. All of the Österreich Institut facilities see themselves as centres for the promotion of the study and cultivation of the German language as 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 directed 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 language assistants** are recruited and assigned to their posts by the association “Österreich-Kooperation”. The chair of the Department of German as a Foreign Language at the University of Vienna selects and assumes responsibility for **German as a foreign language (GFL) trainee teachers**; the programme is administered by the “Österreich-Kooperation”. There are currently lectureships in 129 locations, language assistant posts in ten countries and GFL teaching placements in 45 countries. Cultural events are frequently organised in cooperation with Austrian representations abroad.

V. International Sporting Relations

The largest sports event ever organised in Austria took place in 2008, the European Football Championship “UEFA EURO 2008”. The high level of interest in Austria as a result of the UEFA EURO 2008 was used by the Austrian missions abroad both in the preparatory phase as well as during the championship and was further enhanced by the organisation of a large number of events. Together with the “Österreich am Ball” association and several Swiss institutions, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs funded a number of art and cultural projects, including for instance, “Eleven Minutes – Kurzfilmrolle zur EURO 08“ (Eleven Minutes - a short films reel on the EURO 2008) shown prior to the games and the “Lit-
eraten-EURO 2008” (Dramatists’-EURO 2008). The former project consisted of four short films each, produced by Austrian and Swiss filmmakers and was shown internationally at Austrian representations and in cinemas in the lead-up to the football championship as well as at public screenings. Under the heading of the “Literaten-EURO 2008”, in which Austria, Switzerland and the neighbouring countries of Slovenia and Hungary participated, some 80 authors together with guests from the sports world organised a literature and sports festival involving various literature events, panel discussions and a soccer competition.

VI. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation

Austria intensified its multilateral scientific and technical cooperation both inside and outside of Europe in order to position the country as a location for high-tech industry and research. Austria thus participates in numerous programmes including the European Cooperation in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research (COST) in Brussels, the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, the European Space Agency (ESA) in Paris and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) in Darmstadt. Austria is represented in these organisations by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs together with the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. In addition, Austria’s foreign policy concerns are also represented through its involvement in the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) in Heidelberg, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) in Reading (Great Britain) as well as the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI) in Vienna. In this context, particular importance is attached to fostering the networking of activities launched by the international scientific institutions that are headquartered in Austria.

With an annual research budget of 2 billion euros, the 34 member countries of COST are engaged in scientific and technical cooperation in the field of pre-competitive research. A special focus is placed on initiatives in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of chemistry (nano-sciences and interdisciplinary research). Austria attaches particular importance to promoting third-country participation including intensified cooperation with India. A special COST Fund has also been established to enable the participation of scientists and researchers from the Western Balkan countries. Austria has been a member of COST since 1971.

Austria collaborates with the European Space Agency (ESA), whose Convention enables selective participation in ESA programmes with a guaranteed return on investment. Over the course of the past two decades, Austrian companies have been awarded space technology contracts in proportion to
Austria’s financial contribution to ESA programmes. Participation in these ESA programmes provides an excellent point of departure for industrial series production geared towards commercial applications. Thus Austria is involved through ESA in the construction of the European satellite navigation and positioning system **GALILEO** and in the future European satellite-based Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (**GMES**) system.

### VII. International Cultural Policy at the European Union level

Cultural cooperation within the framework of the EU is enshrined in **Article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (EC Treaty)**, which stipulates that the Community shall contribute to “the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.” Observing the principle of subsidiarity, the Community’s cultural policy complements the national policies of the Member States. It is of importance wherever it is able to support cross-border cooperation, exchange and networking and offer added value at the European level. Responsibility for cultural matters, however, remains the national affair of each individual Member State and the Community has no legislative powers in this field.

The “**Culture**” framework programme (2007-2013) was set up as the uniform framework funding and planning instrument for the implementation of Article 151 of the EC Treaty to promote cultural dialogue and the presentation of the common European cultural heritage and has a budget of 400 million euros. At national level, it is implemented by the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. Under the EU’s culture programme eight Austrian projects were funded in 2008, being granted 3.5 million euros in total. Seven Austrian institutions participated in culture programmes launched by other countries. Moreover, six Austrian cultural institutions received funding to cover their operational expenses in the categories of “festivals” and “networks” amounting to 515,000 euros in total.

Under the new “**Europe for Citizens**” (2007-2013) programme, a total of 36 projects under Austrian leadership were funded in 2008. The goal of the programme, which is scheduled to last seven years and funded with 215 million euros, is to involve European citizens and civil society organisations more closely in the integration process. Furthermore, 17 projects were funded under the action programme “Active Citizens for Europe“, eleven projects under the “Active Civil Society in Europe” action, and eight in the field of the “Active European Remembrance” action in commemoration of the Holocaust victims. Under this programme, total funding of about 1 million euros in total was made available to Austria in 2008.
On 8 January, the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008** was launched at a conference organised by the European Commission and the Slovenian EU Presidency in Ljubljana.

Since the 2007 Communication of the European Commission on a “European agenda for culture in a globalising world”, the number of initiatives which enshrine culture as a horizontal topic in all EU Programmes has increased substantially. On 21 May, the EU Ministers of Culture adopted the **“Work Plan for Culture“ 2008–2010** with special focus on the topics of improving the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field, promoting access to culture, developing data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improving their comparability, maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries, particularly that of small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as promoting and implementing the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

At the high-level conference on “New Paradigms, New Models – Culture in the EU External Relations”, organised by the Slovenian EU Presidency in Ljubljana on 13 and 14 May, the focus was on the contribution culture makes to promoting the identity-creating values of the Union and of human rights and democracy in external relations. In the second half of the year, the French EU Presidency emphasised topics like enhancing the status and the protection of European cultural heritage, combating illicit trafficking in cultural property, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity as well as architecture and its contribution to sustainable development.

The third **Euro-Mediterranean Conference** bringing together the ministers of culture of the Euro-Med Partnership convened in Athens on 29 and 30 May. Topics discussed included the Partnership’s cultural dimension and the intercultural dialogue.

Two meetings of the **EU Education, Youth and Culture Council** were held in 2008: At the meeting in May the culture work programme was prepared and adopted. Furthermore, the role played by intercultural competences was recognised as a means to shape Europe and the goal is to increasingly promote them in future. On the initiative of the French EU Presidency, the Council adopted a European strategy for multilingualism, which focuses on promoting translation activities at the cultural level. Moreover, the Council decided to create a cultural heritage seal to be awarded to cultural assets, serving to promote awareness of their common European culture and history among the citizens of Europe.

At the beginning of April, Germany assumed the chair of the network of National Institutes for Culture in the EU (**EUNIC**), which since its very beginning has played a trend-setting role. In this context, it has become evident that the trend towards establishing regional alliances – or clusters – of European institutes of culture has continued, which also contributed to enhanc-
Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

By the end of the year, EUNIC consisted of 39 regional clusters, for instance in Brazil, China, India and South Africa. In terms of content, the goals pursued focus on intercultural dialogue, multilingualism, migration, EU cultural policy, integration of the Western Balkan states into the EU and maintaining relations with extra-European key regions.

VIII. Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue

1. Austria’s Contribution to Strengthening Dialogue

The internal European and global developments of the past few years have underlined the necessity for a dialogue between the great world religions, as already initiated by Austria two decades ago. At the same time, it has become evident that the dialogue strategy has to go far beyond promoting inter-faith dialogue; indeed, it must encompass issues spanning the spectrum from migration to integration as well as the aspect of global societal dialogue together with promoting societal pluralism and diversity management, conflict prevention and resolution. Austria is thus interested in a comprehensive dialogue among cultures and religions in which issues such as the development of Islam within the framework of European values and the European model of life, as well as a comprehensive dialogue with Muslims and organisations representing them in Europe, play a key role. Furthermore, great attention is paid to the role of women and the strengthening of their role as well as the inclusion of young people.

As part of the efforts launched by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs to support the network of female journalists from the Middle East, Austria and Europe, the seminar “Women – Middle East – Media and Conflict Resolution” was held in Vienna on 28 and 29 January. One of the seminar’s objectives was to increase levels of mutual trust and cooperation among journalists and to further develop the network launched in 2007.

In cooperation with the German Foreign Office, a visiting programme entitled “Dialog konkret” (dialogue concrete) was held between 3 and 6 June. Under this programme, an Indonesian delegation of university directors, professors, lecturers, heads of Koran schools and leading personalities from Islamic institutions met in Vienna.

In cooperation with the Institute for Religious Sciences of the University of Graz, a working session was held in Vienna from 23 to 25 June under the heading of “Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue from Gender Perspectives” with the aim of intensifying an exchange of views on strengthening the role of women through dialogue and to develop strategies for women’s equal participation.
From 15 September to 15 November, a diplomat exchange programme focusing on the dialogue among cultures took place between Austria and Indonesia.

A colloquium on “Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Strategies between East and West? – Diplomacy and Diplomatic Cultures in Dialogue” was held in Vienna on 20 October to discuss the topic of a better understanding of different diplomatic cultures and initiatives.

The seminars on the agenda of the “Landeskundliche Schulung” (training event on geography, history and institutions) for Turkish religious representatives organised in preparation for their assignment to Austria in cooperation with the Turkish Islamic Union for Cultural and Social Cooperation in Austria (ATIB Union), the University of Vienna and other institutions from 2 to 6 November, dealt with migration and integration, religious and cultural pluralism and intercultural dialogue in Austria and Europe.

The conference “Europe and the Arab World – Connecting Partners in Dialogue” with the League of Arab States was organised in Vienna from 17 to 19 December. Experts meetings held in this context dealt with strengthening the role of women, the promotion of civil society, dealing with pluralism and diversity as well as the promotion of intercultural dialogue and political and social participation of youth. The conference closed with a meeting between ministers of EU Member States, the League of Arab States and Turkey on 19 December.

2. Anna Lindh Foundation

Based in Alexandria (Egypt), the Anna Lindh Foundation is entrusted with implementing the social, cultural and interpersonal components of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. It acts as a “network of networks” among the 27 EU Member States. Activities are, however, limited by the scarce financial resources available to many of the national networks. This problem was avoided in Austria as the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs accepted responsibility for coordination. The Austrian network currently comprises 25 members from the field of education, training and youth, arts and culture, science and protection of human rights. In matters related to its “Dialogue among Cultures” priority, the Austrian network is headed by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

3. ASEM Interfaith Dialogue

The fourth ASEM Interfaith Dialogue (Asia-Europe Meeting) was held in Amsterdam from 3 to 5 June. This discussion platform, which convenes once a year alternating between Asia and Europe, is supported by Austria with both financial and personnel resources. Through the resolutions adopted by
the conferences, the Dialogue aims to demonstrate to a broad public in Eastern and South East Asia as well as in Europe how the world’s faiths and religions are working together in their quest for peace.

On ASEF see Chapter A.VI.11.2.
I. Media and Information

1. Public Relations Activities of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs

1. General

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is making every effort to keep the public as well-informed as possible about foreign policy issues. In this spirit, the Federal Ministry organised a Europe Festival event held in September and the traditional Open House in October which were attended by schoolchildren from more than forty schools and thousands of interested citizens. Other special events attracting large numbers of visitors to the Ministry’s offices at No. 8 Minoritenplatz in Vienna were two new series, one organised under the heading of Living History involving witnesses to history, and the other entitled Leaders Live involving international personalities. The Ministry’s updated homepage also offers enhanced services by providing barrier-free access and improved accessibility, particularly for Austrians who find themselves in difficulty abroad. Collaboration with Austrian and international media is reflected in the more than twenty press conferences held over the year and the regular responses to inquiries by journalists on international developments as well as on consular assistance regularly offered abroad. The latter includes, for instance, kidnapping cases and evacuations of Austrian citizens from crisis regions around the globe as well as in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai (India), to name but a few.

2. Internet

In February, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs modified its website, taking the necessary steps to provide a range of transparent information on the world-wide web also catering to the requirements of persons with disabilities in order to offer barrier-free access in line with international standards. This update went hand in hand with a change-over to a new Internet content management system. By the end of the year, the homepages of Austrian representations abroad had been equipped with a uniform corporate design and content management system. Further improvements to be implemented in 2009 will contribute to further enhancing barrier-free access.

The number of visits to the Ministry’s webpage has continued to increase. In 2008, an average number of 230,000 monthly hits were registered on the Ministry’s central page. In April and July this number rose to 269,000 and even reached 290,000 hits in the month of June.
3. Publications

A number of publications were issued informing citizens about the European Union and the Treaty of Lisbon which for the first time included the use of digital media. The publication “Generation Europe” was published both as a printed booklet, on CD-ROM and on USB stick.

In the course of Austria’s successful candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, the brochure “Austria and the United Nations” was published. Revised editions of “Advice for Travellers Abroad” and “Austria in Brief” were also issued. Moreover, the Ministry commemorated the 100th anniversary of the birth of Friedrich Torberg (1908-1979) by publishing an English booklet on the author. In addition to the Ministry’s own publications, funding was made available to cover the printing expenses for further publications.

4. Press Conferences and Events

A significant part of public relations work involved the support of media representatives at numerous press conferences and events organised by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. Among the events that attracted international attention were the meeting of the International Steering Group for Kosovo (ISG) in spring, the event celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights in August and the International EU-Arab League Dialogue Conference in December. Furthermore, Austria’s assumption of the chair in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) and the related events also met with substantial interest. From March to November, developments in connection with two Austrian tourists who had been held hostage in the North of Mali also attracted a lot of international media attention.

5. Press Officers’ Conference

With a view to the 2009 “European elections”, discussions focusing on the topic of EU communication/information with the head of the Brussels-based office of the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) and the head of the Vienna-based European Parliament Information Office were organised for the annual conference of press officers at Austrian representations abroad. The conference also included a visit to the editorial office of an Austrian print medium, where there were opportunities to discuss practical aspects of daily press work, as well as a presentation of the project launched to create a uniform webpage structure.
M. The Austrian Foreign Service

I. Introduction

In 2008, the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs (FMEIA) defined priorities and allocated necessary resources in preparation for Austria's forthcoming membership of the UNSC. It also launched preparations in the passport and visa sector to establish the necessary infrastructure for the collection of biometric data. Supplying the representations abroad with the new IT system continued according to plan. Embassies in Teheran and Zagreb moved into new premises.

II. Working at the Foreign Ministry

Staffing levels in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic staff (A1/v1)</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consular/administrative staff (A2/v2)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical staff, qualified support, secretarial staff and auxiliary service (A3/v3-A7/v5)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT specialists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>690</strong></td>
<td><strong>652</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,342</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women accounted for 48.6 per cent of all staff, exceeding the 40 per cent share of women set out in the Federal Equal Treatment Act (Federal Law Gazette No. 100/1993 as amended). In the diplomatic service the percentage of female staff has continually increased in recent years, reaching the highest level ever in 2008 with 33.6 per cent.

102 persons joined the Foreign Service in 2008 after successfully completing the statutory selection process (Examen Préalable) by an independent selection board.
Recruitment 2008

The newly hired personnel contributed to increasing staffing levels at the “visa hot spots”. Attaché(e)s for migration affairs were appointed on the basis of newly created positions. The new recruits undergo a basic training programme which is, as far as consular matters are concerned, based on the agreement on joint training measures signed between the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs and the Federal Ministry of the Interior in 2008.

654 local employees support the staff at the Austrian representations abroad. A total of 48 trainees got to know the multifaceted work at the FMEIA.

* In 2008, two admission processes took place for the v1 (diplomatic service) career scheme, one admission process for the v2 (consular/administrative level service) and nine for the v3 (technical service) career scheme.
Trainees in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years (with the exception of 1998), the average *retirement age* at the FMEIA has always been above the 60-year threshold, thus exceeding the average retirement age of public officials in Austria, which was 60.2 years in 2008.

Retirement age of FMEIA staff

![Graph showing retirement age of FMEIA staff from 1998 to 2008]
III. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget at a Glance

The total amount allocated as operative budget for the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs in the federal budget estimate for 2008 was 215.304 million euros. Austria’s mandatory contributions to the budget of the United Nations and its peacekeeping operations amounted to 40.224 million euros. About 72% of the operative budget was used for the Austrian representations abroad.

### Budget overview for 1998 – 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FMEIA budget (in million euros)</th>
<th>Contributions to international organisations, international conferences, development cooperation, grant programmes in Eastern Europe (in million euros)</th>
<th>FMEIA operative budget (in million euros)</th>
<th>FMEIA operative budget as a percentage of the total federal budget (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>314.673</td>
<td>133.327</td>
<td>181.346</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>297.232</td>
<td>113.901</td>
<td>183.331</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>305.662</td>
<td>127.165</td>
<td>178.497</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>303.409</td>
<td>122.652</td>
<td>180.757</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>299.775</td>
<td>121.938</td>
<td>177.837</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>307.000</td>
<td>112.298</td>
<td>194.702</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>340.928</td>
<td>144.892</td>
<td>196.036</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>380.000</td>
<td>175.799</td>
<td>204.201</td>
<td>0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>388.000</td>
<td>183.282</td>
<td>204.718</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>388.109</td>
<td>172.767</td>
<td>215.342</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>388.087</td>
<td>172.783</td>
<td>215.304</td>
<td>0.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The percentage share of the FMEIA’s operative budget in the federal budget of 1998 was originally calculated on the basis of the total budget. From 1999, only the general budget was used, without taking the compensatory budget into account. The percentage shares for 1998 were therefore adjusted accordingly.
IV. Worldwide Infrastructure

1. Facility Management, Real Estate and Construction

The FMEIA uses some 340 properties located in 80 countries as embassies, consular offices, cultural forums, missions to intergovernmental organisations and for residential purposes. These premises include historical buildings, inter alia in London, Paris and Rome and more modern properties such as those in Berlin, Brasilia, New York and Tokyo. A team of facility management specialists carries out the necessary purchases, sales, rental, conversion and renovation activities and also evaluates the premises.

All properties are used by the FMEIA to implement the Ministry’s foreign policy and consular tasks. The most important criteria in assessing and evaluating these facilities are functionality, safety and security as well as cost effectiveness. Ecological sustainability is of increasing importance in this context. Furthermore, enhanced cooperation with EU partners such as Hungary enables the Ministry to benefit from synergy effects.

2. Information and Communication Technology

Major ICT projects within the FMEIA included the FMEIA’s Electronic Information Management System, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) communications and a foreign affairs database (“Elektronische Basisinformation Außenpolitik”).

The FMEIA continued the renewal of ICT infrastructure launched under the project name of ELISA (Elektronisches Informationsmanagementsystem des Außenministeriums, the Foreign Ministry’s Electronic Information Management System) at the Austrian representations. The project involves the replacement of hard- and software, the introduction of state-of-the-art office automation software and the implementation of an information management system (IMS). IMS supports integrated processing of inter alia electronic data collection, categorisation, processing, filing and archiving, thus gradually replacing paper files currently still in use at the representations. By the end of the year, 56 embassies, missions and consular offices had been equipped with ELISA.

The Austrian representations are connected to the headquarters’ telephone system by “Voice over Internet Protocol” (VoIP), i.e. telephony via the data network. Using this award-winning system, telephone calls between headquarters and representations worldwide can be made free of charge via the Ministry’s own WAN data lines and/or via satellite (VSAT) thus lowering costs and simplifying communication. By the end of the year, three quarters of the representations had been equipped with this system.

The FMEIA introduced its new approach towards information management by launching ELBA (Elektronische Basisinformation Außenpolitik,
electronic foreign affairs data base) in April 2007. Information prepared for the Ministry’s decision-makers is made accessible to an extended group of authorised employees, irrespective of which part of the Ministry they work in. The information system enables authorised employees to access constantly updated information worldwide and around the clock, thus facilitating cooperation among staff involved in preparing and processing information at home and abroad.

3. Information Management – Knowledge Management

Around 13,000 volumes, of which 1,000 were newly acquired, were added to the Foreign Policy Library (Außenpolitische Bibliothek). The library is used inter alia by Ministry staff, students of the Diplomatic Academy and other institutions. Cultural forums continued organising training seminars on the ALEPH library system, enabling further improvements in the performance of specific online researches in the files of the networked library catalogues from anywhere around the world.

The number of inquiries from researchers for information in the FMEIA’s files increased. Specific requests relate, for instance, to research in connection with biographies or the history and evolution of international organisations. The inspection of material on the diplomatic relations between Austria and the Federal Republic of Germany/German Democratic Republic was a major project involving international and Austrian academics. Wherever possible the file index used by headquarters is adapted to that of ELISA to enable the establishment of direct links between the two indices currently in use.

V. Missions Abroad – Honorary Consulates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diplomatic and other missions of the FMEIA</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral embassies</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent representations at international orgs.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulates general</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent cultural forums</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other missions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

After officially recognising Kosovo, Austria upgraded the Pristina office of the Austrian Embassy Belgrade to an embassy. With 81 bilateral embassies, the network of Austria’s representations abroad is relatively small compared to similar European countries (Sweden: 84, Belgium: 89, Switzerland: 98).
In addition to the missions directly under responsibility of the FMEIA, Austria’s international presence also includes 17 development cooperation offices managed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the Austria Institutes (German language courses) at eight different locations abroad plus representations like the Austrian mission at the OECD in Paris which do not operate under the FMEIA. In total, representatives from Austria were posted to 90 nations around the world.

In addition, 280 honorary consulates around the world offer valuable support to the professional Austrian Foreign Service. Honorary Consuls have close ties to Austria and provide the necessary infrastructure to offer consular services. Thanks to their commitment and dedication, they extend the network of Austria’s international consular presence and contribute to promoting economic and cultural relations between Austria and the respective host country.

VI. Specialised Attaché(e)s

In addition to Foreign Service staff, numerous specialised attaché(e)s are posted to Austrian representations. These specialised attaché(e)s are seconded by ministries and institutions other than the FMEIA and cover those areas that fall within the scope of the ministries and institutions according to the respective provisions under Austrian legislation. They are not subject to the mandatory job rotation principle applicable to Foreign Service staff, which means that they may work at the same post for ten years or even longer. Specialised attaché(e)s are generally notified as diplomatic personnel with the receiving or host state. They are usually assisted by staff, often translators, who are either sent from Vienna or hired locally.

While the group of specialised attaché(e)s was, until the early 1990s, primarily composed of defence attaché(e)s of the Federal Ministry of Defence and trade attaché(e)s seconded by the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the fall of the Iron Curtain and Austria’s accession to the European Union also resulted in a strong increase both in their number and range of locations. In addition to the FMEIA, other ministries and organisations present with specialised attaché(e)s in Belgrade, for instance, are the Federal Ministry of Defence, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture, the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the Austrian Development Agency and the Federal Economic Chamber. Police liaison officers are based in Kiev, Sarajevo, Amman and Rabat and attaché(e)s for agriculture and environmental affairs are not only posted to Budapest and Prague but also to Moscow and Washington, D.C.

The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber through its Foreign Trade Promotion Organisation, employs some 590 staff abroad, of which 125 are trade attaché(e)s. Approximately 80 persons, of which 20 are attaché(e)s for
Specialised Attaché(e)s
devlopment cooperation and technical assistance, work abroad for ADA. A further 280 persons - including some 155 specialised attaché(e)s – are on active duty for other ministries outside Austria’s borders. Furthermore, other bodies such as the Federal Chamber of Labour and the Austrian National Bank send a small number of specialised attaché(e)s abroad. All in all, there were 392 Austrian diplomatic and consular staff members working abroad as well as 320 specialised attaché(e)s.

Many other countries also draw on the expertise of specialised attaché(e)s to represent national interests abroad. Posting specialised attaché(e)s has the advantage that expert knowledge is directly available abroad and Ministries have their representatives at hand at key posts without having to establish and maintain a cost-intensive network of representations of their own. Maintaining the pivotal role played by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs as a competence, networking, coordination and information centre for Austrian foreign policy and continuing the successful cooperation between career diplomats and specialised attaché(e)s ensures the effective and efficient representation of Austria’s interests abroad and in its relations with other countries.
The Austrian Foreign Service

VII. Organisational Structure

SECRETARY-GENERAL
Johannes KYRLÉ
Head of Secretary-General’s Office
Harald GÜNTER

FEDERAL MINISTER
Michael SPINDELEGGER
Head of Ministers’ Office
Nikolaus MARSHIK
Staff Unit I:
Jan KICKERT

I. General Affairs
Johannes KYRLÉ
Deputy:

I.1 Protocol
Melitta SCHUBERT
1.1a Elisabeth SEVELDA-GREDLER
1.1b Alexander EHRLICH-ADAM
1.1c Werner AMMINGER

I.2 General International Law
Helmut TICHY
1.2a Martin KLEIN
1.2b Thomas BAIER
1.2c Thomas LOIDL

I.3 Press and Information
Peter LAUNSKY
1.3a Thomas SCHLESINGER
1.3b Franz HUTEGGER
1.3c ...

I.4 European Law
Andreas KUMIN
1.4a Ulla KRAUS-NUNSAUER

I.5 Organisation of International Conferences and Matters relating to International Organisations in Austria
Ernst-Peter BREZOVSKY

I.6 Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Minority Issues
Engelbert THEUERMANN
1.7a Georg HEINDL
1.7b Elisabeth RIEDERER

I.7 Security Affairs
Daniel KRUMHOLZ

II. Political Affairs
Deputy:
Ralph SCHEIDE

II.1 Security Policy Affairs, CFSP, General Policy Issues
Thomas HAJNOČZI
II.1a K. FAMIRA-PARSETICH
II.1b Karl PRUMMER
II.1c Walter SCHIRMER

II.2 South Tyrol and Southern Europe
Georg STILLFRIED

II.3 Eastern and Southeastern Europe, Central Asia: Central European Initiative (CEI)
Franz J. KUGLITSCHE
II.3a Josef LITSCHAUER
II.3b Thomas SCHMÖLL

II.4 Middle East, Maghreb and Mashrek States
Ralph SCHEIDE

II.5 International Organisations
Peter HUBER
II.5a ...

II.6 Central, Western and Northern Europe
Herbert KRAUSS
II.6a Martin PAMMER

II.7 European Security and Cooperation, Council of Europe
Christine MOSER
II.7a Desireé SCHWEITZER
II.7b Robert MÜLLER
II.7c Harald KOTSCHY

II.8 Arms Control and Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, Multilateral Atomic Energy Issues, and IAEA
Alexander MARSCHIK
II.8a Andreas LAUNER
II.8b Alexander BENEDICT
II.8c Margit BRUCK-FRIEDRICH

II.9 The Americas, Caribbean, OAS
Isabel RAUSCHER
II.9a Andrea MELAN

II.10 Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, ASEM
Bernhard ZIMBURG
II.10a Stefan PEHRINGER
II.10b Bruno BILEK

II.11 Sub-Saharan Africa
Helmut FREUDENSCHUSS

II.12 Sub Saharan Africa
Helmut FREUDENSCHUSS

III. Economic Affairs and European Integration
Rudolf LENNKH
Deputy:
Johannes EIGNER

III.1 EU General Affairs
Michael SCHWARZINGER
III.1a ...

III.2 European Council and General Affairs Council, COREPER II, Elisabeth KEHRER
III.2a Gerhard SAILLER

III.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Trade Relations, EU Trade Policy, Export Promotion, Investment Protection, International Financial Institutions
Bettina KIRNBAUER
III.3a Martin GÄRTNER
III.3b Marcus BERGMANN

III.4 EU Enlargement, Trade Relations with Non-EU Countries and with Central Asia
Johannes EIGNER
III.4a Johann SPITZER
III.4b Maximilian HENNIG

III.5 Coordination of matters relating to COREPER I, Internal Market, EU Policies, Standards, Employment and Social Questions
Karl MÜLLER
III.5a Wolfgang BANYAI
III.5b Maximilian HENNIG

III.6 Transport and Energy, Environmental Protection, EURATOM
Christian KREPELAK
III.6a Katharina WIESER
III.6b Andreas SCHMIDINGER
III.6c Yvonne DESMEDT-TONCIC-SORIN

III.7 EU Budget, Financial and Monetary Affairs
Renate KÖBLER
III.7a Regina RUSZ
III.7b Walter ROCHEL

III.8 Central, Western and Northern Europe
Herbert KRAUSS
II.6a Martin PAMMER

III.9 Security Affairs
Daniel KRUMHOLZ

IV. Legal and Consular Affairs
Elisabeth TICZY-FISLSBERGER
Deputy:
Andrea IKIC-BOHM

IV.1 Legal Protection, Legal Cooperation and Inter-Authority Assistance, General Legal Affairs
Gerhard DEISS
IV.1a ...

IV.2 Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic, Asylum, Residence and Migration Matters, Passport Unit
Andrea IKIC-BOHM
IV.2a Michael HEINZ
IV.2b Joachim OPPINGER
Peter GRIESSMAIER
Passport Printing: Peter GRIESSMAIER

IV.3 Austrians Abroad, Property and Protection Affairs, Property Affairs, Social and Health Affairs, Citizenship Matters
Thomas BUCHSBAUM
IV.3a ...

IV.4 EU Budget, Financial and Monetary Affairs
Renate KOBLER
III.7a Regina FIGL

IV.5 Citizens’ Help Desk, Axel WECH
IV.5a Christian HASENBICHLER
Legalisation Office
Albin CSENCITS

IV.6 Transport and Energy, Environmental Protection, EURATOM
Christian KREPELAK
III.6a Katharina WIESER
III.6b Andreas SCHMIDINGER
III.6c Yvonne DESMEDT-TONCIC-SORIN

IV.7 International and EU Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs
Johann BRIEGER
IV.7a Regina RUSZ
IV.7b Walter ROCHEL

IV.8 EU General Affairs
Michael SCHWARZINGER
III.1a ...

IV.9 Security Affairs
Daniel KRUMHOLZ

IV.10 Security Affairs
Daniel KRUMHOLZ

IV.11 Security Affairs
Daniel KRUMHOLZ

II.12 Security Policy Affairs, CFSP, General Policy Issues
Thomas HAJNOČZI
II.1a K. FAMIRA-PARSETICH
II.1b Karl PRUMMER
II.1c Walter SCHIRMER

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II.17c Harald KOTSCHY

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II.18a Andreas LAUNER
II.18b Alexander BENEDICT
II.18c Margit BRUCK-FRIEDRICH

II.19 The Americas, Caribbean, OAS
Isabel RAUSCHER
II.19a Andrea MELAN

II.20 Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, ASEM
Bernhard ZIMBURG
II.20a Stefan PEHRINGER
II.20b Bruno BILEK

II.21 Sub-Saharan Africa
Helmut FREUDENSCHUSS

II.22 Sub Saharan Africa
Helmut FREUDENSCHUSS
# Organisational Structure

## Inspectorate General

**Christian LASSMANN**  
**Deputy:**  
Wolf-Dietrich HEIM

## V. Cultural Policy

**Emil BRIX**  
**Deputy:**  
Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH

### V.1 Coordination, Planning, Financing and Evaluation of the International Cultural Policy, Cultural Public Relations

- Stephan VATRIK
- V.1a Andreas PAWLITSCHKEK
- V.1b Franz BISCHL

### V.2 Organisation of Cultural and Scientific Events Abroad

- Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH
- V.2a ...
- V.2b Stella AVALONE
- V.2c Marianne FELDMANN
- V.2d Christine DOLLINGER

### V.3 Scientific-technological and University Cooperation

- Florian HAUG
- V.3a Sabine KROSSENBRUNNER
- V.3b Ernst AICHINGER

### V.4 Multilateral Cultural Policy Affairs, UNESCO

- V.4a Sabine STAFFELMAYR

## VI. Administrative Affairs

**Martin FALB**  
**Deputy:**  
Michael ZIMMERMANN

### VI.1 Human resources

- Management, Accreditation, Notification,  
  Thomas WUNDERBALDINGER Registry  
- Gustav SCHUTTE
- V.1a Gerda JOHAM
- V.1b Silvia NEUREITER
- V.1c Sigurd PACHER
- V.1d Barbara PFEIFFER
- V.1e Susanne KEPPNER-SCHLESINGER

### VI.2 Foreign Service Compensations and Allowances, Social Security Matters

- Michael BRUNNER
- V.2a Helga KUBICEK
- V.2c Franz RAZ

## VII. Development Cooperation

**Irene FREUDENSchUSS-REICHL**  
**Deputy:**  
Anton MAIR

### VII.1 Multilateral Development Cooperation

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## (as of 31 December 2008)
# Index

acquis communautaire 4–5  
Action Plan of the Euro Area Countries 2  
ADA XV, 105, 113, 115, 119–121, 143  
ADAM XV, 172  
ADC XV, 105–115, 118  
ADEA XV, 113  
Afghanistan XXXVI, 26, 29, 31, 50–51, 66–68, 74, 79, 81, 122, 133, 140, 171  
African Development Bank XV  
African Union XV–XXXVII, 26, 30, 65, 136  
AFTA XV  
Agency for European Integration XV  
Aid for Trade  
Aid For Trade Global Review 177  
Albania XXI, XXIX, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXV, 5–6, 34, 74, 77, 84, 95, 98, 110, 116, 119, 150, 185  
AMISON XV  
Andean Community XVII, 57–59  
Ankara Protocol 5  
Anna Lindh Foundation 48, 198  
Annual Security Review Conference XVI, 81  
AÖWB XVI, 102  
ARF XVI, 71  
Argentina 54, 56, 58, 102, 125, 159, 187  
Arms Control XXXIV, 148, 151  
ASEAN XV, XVI, XXI, 69, 71, 135  
ASEM XVI, 71, 198  
Association Agreement 32, 57–59  
Association for the Development of Education in Africa XV, 113  
Association of Cities and Towns 14  
Australia XV, 70, 72, 101–102, 126, 149, 153, 191  
Austria Institute XV, 193  
Austria Libraries IV, 184, 190–191  
Austrian Armed Forces 26, 28  
Austrian Development Cooperation IV, XV, XXXII, 105, 174, 179, 187, 192  
Austrian Exchange Service XXXI, 191  
Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies XXXII  
Automated Donor Assistance Mechanism XV, 172  
Bahrain 48  
Barcelona Process 47, 158  
BAT/BEP XVI  
Belgium XV, 115, 131, 164  
benchmarks 5  
BINUB XVI, 138  
biodiversity 57, 127, 179, 181–182  
Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention XVII, 150  
Bolivia XXIX, XXXIII, 54, 56, 59, 120  
Bonn Declaration 52–53  
BONUCA XVII, 137  
border control 28–29  
Bosnia and Herzegovina XXIV, XXXVIII, 5–6, 26–27, 31, 35, 47, 77, 84–85, 110, 121, 135, 140, 168, 191  
Brazil 54, 57–58, 90, 102, 156, 159, 173, 176, 178, 181, 185, 197  
Brunei 71  
Budapest 22, 88, 193  
Bulgaria 5–6, 9, 23, 32, 85, 87, 95, 190–191  
Burkina Faso XV, XVIII, 63, 107, 113, 115, 119, 121, 131, 187  
Burundi XVI, XVII, XXV, XXXII, 26, 62, 137–138, 141  
Cambodia 69, 71, 158  
Canada 50–51, 53, 90, 98, 145, 149, 156, 160, 164, 191  
candidate countries 4, 6, 178  
Cape Verde XXXII, 59, 64, 108, 116, 177  
CARDS XVII, 6  
Caribbean XV, XVII, XX, XXI, XXIII, XXVII, XXVIII, 51, 54, 57–59, 72, 107, 114, 118, 149, 162  
caricature dispute 25  
CARICOM XVII, XVIII, XX, 59, 107, 125  
Cariforum XVII, 57  
Cartagena Protocol 181  
Caucasus XXXVI, 26, 41, 43, 76, 78, 85, 111, 154, 159  
CCPCJ XVII, 172  
CDF XVIII  
CEDAW XVIII, 162  
Central African Republic XVII, XXIII, XXX, 28, 59, 125, 137, 140–141, 174  
Central America XXI, XXII, 57–58, 106–107, 114  
Central Asia XVII, 26, 43–44, 76, 79, 81, 111, 114, 159  
Central Emergency Response Fund XVIII, 123, 128
Index

Central Europe  XXVII, 88, 186
Central European Initiative  XVIII, 39, 87
CERF  XVIII, 123, 128
CERN  XVIII, 194
CFSP  XVIII, 25–26, 155
CGIAR  XVIII
Chad  XXIII, XXX, 25–26, 28, 31, 59, 61, 122, 131, 136–137, 140, 156, 166
Chemical Weapons Convention  XX, 150
Chile  55, 57, 159, 178, 182
China  XIX, 47, 51, 65–67, 71–72, 90, 120, 131, 148, 153, 156, 158, 176, 178, 185, 187, 197
Civilian Headline Goal  29–30
Climate Change  XXVIII, XXXVII, 72, 143, 146–147, 182–183
CND  XIX, 171–172
COHOM  XIX, 155, 158
Colombia  XVI, XXII, XXIV, 55–56, 59, 159, 168
COMESA  XIX, 65
Committee of Permanent Representatives  15
Committee of the Regions  13, 87
Commonwealth of Independent States  XIX, XXXVI, 6, 40, 42, 76
Conference on Disarmament  XVIII, 149
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research  XVIII
Convention on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education and Science  190
COPUOS  XIX, 128
corruption  4–5, 27, 34, 45, 56, 68, 70, 75, 79, 85, 139, 173
COST  XIX, 194
Côte d'Ivoire  XXX, XXXVIII, 26, 63, 136, 138–139
Council of Europe  XV, XXII, XXXV, 25, 39, 82–87, 90, 104, 155, 164, 192
Council Presidency  25, 44, 47, 155
Crime Prevention  XVII, XIX, XXXI, 127, 172–173
crisis management  25–26, 29–31, 42, 155
Croatia  3–6, 12, 30, 32–33, 44, 47, 74, 98, 111, 131, 186, 191
CRT  XX, 30
CSME  XX
CSocD  XX, 128
CSW  XX, 163
CTITF  XX, 173
Cuba  54–56
Cultural Forum  XV, XVIII, 184
Cyprus  XXXVII, 4, 24, 126, 135, 164
Czech Republic  10, 23, 30, 75, 81, 88, 93, 98, 100–101, 114, 190
DAC  XX, 105, 115, 179
Darfur  XXI, XXXVII, 28, 60, 122, 136, 174
Death Penalty  156
Declaration on Transatlantic Relations  53
Democratic People's Republic of Korea  67, 148, 162
DFS  XXI
Doha Round  72
Dominican Republic  XXI, 54, 99
DPKO  XXI, 129
DR-CAFTA  XXI
drug trafficking  28, 57, 64, 107, 139
EASA  XXI, 20
East African Community  XXI, 65
East Asia Summit  XXI, 71
EBA  XXI
ECHR  XXI, 83, 87, 164
ECMWF  XXI, 194
ECOFIN  XXI
Economic and Social Council  XXII, 14, 141
Economic Partnership Agreement  XXIII, 58, 118
ECOSOC  XXII, 141
ECOWAS  XXII, 63–64, 113
EC Treaty  96, 195
EDA  XXII
EDF  XXII, 72
EEBC  XXII, 60
EEP  XXII
effective multilateralism  25
Egypt  29, 31, 45, 47–48, 65, 90, 185, 198
EIDHR  XXII, 158
ELBA  206
Elektronische Basisinformation Außenpolitik  206
ELISA  206–207
EMBC  XXII, 194
Energy and Environment Partnership  XXII
Index

energy supply III, 8, 14, 21, 50, 72, 179
environmental protection 6, 18–19, 86, 94, 116, 179
EPA XXIII, 118
Erasmus 191
Eritrea XXII, XXXVIII, 60, 137, 140
ESA XXIII, 194–195
ESPI XXIII, 194
Ethiopia XXII, XXXVIII, 59–60, 64, 108, 116, 119, 121–122, 137, 140
EU-Africa Strategy 31, 64, 118
EU BAM Rafah 29
EU Council XIX, 6, 35, 39, 44, 47, 97, 118, 155–156, 159
EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator 24
EUFOR XXIII, 26, 28, 31, 36, 61, 131, 137, 140, 156, 166
EUFOR Chad/RCA 26, 28, 31, 131, 137, 140
EU Foreign Ministers 3, 5, 40
EUFOR Tchad/RCA 166
EU Fundamental Rights Agency 83
EU Guidelines on Combating Violence against Women 157
EUFJUST LEX 29, 46
EU-Kyrgyzstan Cooperation Council 43
EU-LAC summit 57
EU-LAC summit process 57
EUMC XXIII
EUMETSAT XXIV, 194
EUMM Georgia 27, 30
EUNIC XXIV, 196
EUPM XXIV, 27
EUPOL Afghanistan 29
EUPOL COPPS XXIV, 29–30
EUPOL RD Congo 28
Eurasian Economic Community XXIV, 42
Euro-Atlantic Partnership XXI, 74
Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council XXI, 74
Euromed 48
Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly 48
Euro-Mediterranean partnership XXX, 198
European Council 1–3, 6, 10, 16–18, 21, 23, 26, 118
European Court of First Instance XXI, 12–13
European Court of Justice XXI, 12–13
European Economic Recovery Plan 1, 3
European Football Championship 89, 184, 193
European integration 14
European Investment Bank XXII, 3
European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument XXIII, 32
European Neighbourhood Policy XXII, 31
European Parliament XXIII, XXX, XXXV, 8, 11–13, 20, 22, 35, 56, 103, 154, 156, 201
European Social Fund XXIII, 16
European Space Agency XXIII, 194
European Union III, XIX, XXIII–XXV, XXXII, XXXVI, 1–3, 5–6, 8, 12, 14, 17–18, 21, 24–27, 46, 57, 64, 66, 94, 97, 103, 117, 155–156, 162–163, 170, 195, 201
European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 22, 112, 185, 191, 196
EUROPOL XXIV, 25
EU-Russia Framework Agreement 42
EU-Russia human rights consultations 42
EUSR XXIV, 26, 35, 40–41
EU-US Task Force 52
External Aid Programmes 6
External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy 12
FAO XXIV, 142–143, 179
FARC XXIV, 55–56
Federal Constitutional Act 14–15
Federal Council 9, 14–15, 48, 86, 101, 169
Federal Equal Treatment Act 202
Federal Government XXXVI, 14, 60, 92, 98–101, 103, 120, 174
Federation of Austrian Industry 15
fight against corruption 4–5
Film 187
Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty 149
Forum for Security Co-operation 81
France 9, 18, 24, 47–48, 60, 78, 99, 131, 140, 142, 148
Index

Free Trade Agreement XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXXI, 49, 53, 68, 71–72
FRONTEX XXV, 170
G20 176
GALILEO 195
GDP XXV, 1, 16, 65, 69
GDPRD XXV
General Affairs and External Relations Council 25, 32, 89, 117, 157
Geneva Conference on Disarmament 149
Georgia III, XXXVIII, 25–27, 30–31, 38, 41–42, 74, 76–81, 84–85, 95, 97, 120, 125, 132–133, 135, 142, 152, 164, 168, 171, 177
GFL 193
GFSE XXV
Global Donor Platform for Rural Development XXV
GMES XXVI, 195
Greece 33, 48, 76, 82, 95, 164
Group of 8 XXVI
GRULAC XXVI, 162
Guatemala XXX, 56, 58, 107
Guinea XXXII, XXXVIII, 26, 28, 59, 63–64, 106, 125, 139, 141, 158
Gulf Cooperation Council XXV, 48
Gulf region 48
Hague Code of Conduct XXVI, 126, 150
Hague Programme 23
Haiti XXX, 54, 119–122, 136
Hamas 29, 45
HCFCs XXVI, 183
Heads of State and Government 2, 47, 57, 65, 82, 143
HIV/AIDS XXVI, XXXVI, 116–117, 172
HRC XXVI, 84, 160–162, 167
HSN XXVI, 164
Human Dimension Implementation Meeting 80
Humanitarian Affairs XXXI, 121, 128
Human Security Network XXVI, 164
Human Trafficking XXXVII, 80, 173–174
Hungary XXXIII, 9, 23, 32, 88, 93, 98–99, 101, 114, 190–191, 194, 206
IAAC XXVI
IAEA XXVI, 47, 126, 146
ICAO XV, XXVI, 144
ICCPR XXVII, 158
ICI XXVII, 133
ICIMOD XXVII, 109
ICJ XXVII, 34, 36, 55–56, 131, 142
ICPDR XXVII, 94
ICRC XXVII, 121–122
ICTY XXVII, 4, 6, 36, 131
IEA XXVII, 178–180
IFAD XXVII, 144
IFRC XXVII, 122
IGAD XXVII, 60, 65
IIASA XXVII, 106, 194
ILO XXVIII, 143, 173
India 51, 68–69, 72, 90, 144, 148, 150, 153, 156, 176, 178, 190, 194, 197, 200
Indonesia 70–71, 99, 131, 133, 178, 182, 198
Information Management System 206
infringement proceedings 13
International Atomic Energy Agency XXVI, 47, 146
International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development XXVII, 109
International Civil Aviation Organization XXVI, 144
International Court of Justice XXVII, 34, 36, 55, 142, 174
International Criminal Court XXVI, 60, 131, 136, 174
International Cultural Policy 184, 188, 195
International Fund for Agricultural Development XXVII, 144
International Labour Organization XXVIII, 143
International Maritime Organization XXVIII
International Monetary Fund XXVIII, 2
International Telecommunications Union XXVIII, 143
International Whaling Commission XXIX, 182
Internet Governance Forum XXVII, 144
Iran 12, 25–26, 47, 125–126, 133, 146, 156, 159, 162
Iraq XXI, XXVI, XXVII, XXXVI, XXXVIII, 25, 29, 46, 50, 122, 125, 133, 171
Ireland XV, 10, 30, 151, 164
IRENA XXVIII, 21, 114
ISAF XXVIII, 67, 74, 134, 140
Index

Israel 31–32, 45, 132, 148, 153, 159–161, 178, 191
ITF XXVIII, 192, 201
ITPGFRA XXVIII
ITU XXVIII, XXIX, 143–144
Japan 66–67, 71–72, 90, 98, 131, 149, 176, 180, 188, 191
JCMB XXIX
Jordan 31, 48, 156, 164
justice and home affairs 5–7, 23
Kenya XXIX, XXXIII, 26, 62, 65, 108, 119, 156, 168, 185
KFOR XXIX, 27, 38, 74, 140
Kosovo XIX, XXIX, XXXIII, XXXVI, XXXVIII, 6, 26–27, 31, 33, 35–37, 74–77, 88, 110, 119, 135, 140, 171, 201
Kuwait XXXVIII, 48
Kyoto Protocol 181, 183
Kyrgyzstan 43, 77, 79, 159
Laos 71
Latin America XVII, XXI, XXIX, 28, 51, 54, 57–58, 64
LDCs XXIX
League of Arab States III, 48, 46, 60, 125, 132, 168, 198
Lebanon XXXVIII, 31, 46, 126, 132
Legal Tools Project 175
Liberia XXXVIII, 63, 106, 139
Libya 31–32, 47, 131, 150
Lifelong Learning 22, 192
Literature XXIX, 185, 189
London 2, 14, 24, 52, 187, 206
Macedonia XXI, XXXIV, 5–6, 26, 30, 33–34, 74, 77, 80, 85, 98, 110, 164, 190
Madagascar XXXVI, 168
Madrid 24, 57, 128, 146, 187
Malaysia 70–71, 142
Mali 59, 63, 97, 125, 164, 201
Malta 9, 126
MCDA XXX
MCDU XXX, 121
MERCOSUR XXX, 57–58
Mexico XXXIII, 51, 53–54, 57, 116, 119, 131, 151, 159, 162
Middle East 25–26, 44, 46, 70, 125, 132, 161, 197
Middle East conflict 25
Migration XXVII, XXVIII, XXXIX, 82, 170–171, 179
Military and Civil Defence Unit 121
Mine Action Programme 121, 151
minority rights 4, 43, 163
MINURCAT XXX, 28, 31, 131, 137, 140
MINURSO XXX, 139
MINUSTAH XXX, 136
Missile Technology Control Regime XXX, 153
MNF XXX, 133
Montenegró 5–6, 32, 34–35, 47, 77, 80, 84–85, 94, 110, 113, 164, 177
Montreal Protocol 183
MONUC XXX, 138, 140
Mozambique XXV, 59, 108, 119, 121, 125, 168, 187
Multinational Force XXX
Myanmar 26, 69, 71, 120, 122, 134, 160, 162
NAFTA XXXI, 53
NAIADES XXXI
National Council 7, 9, 14–15, 82, 86, 91, 103, 156
National Institutes for Culture XXIV, 196
Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East XXXVIII, 122
NATO XXXI, 30–31, 33–34, 38, 42, 74, 81, 167
NEADS XXXI, 158
NEPAD XXXI, 128
Nepal XXXVIII, 68, 109, 117, 119, 125, 134, 158, 167
Netherlands XV, 30, 99, 107, 115, 149, 164
New Partnership for Africa’s Development XXXI, 124, 128
New Transatlantic Agenda XXXI, 52
New Zealand 72, 151, 191
NGO XXXI, 114
NGOs 82, 107–108, 114, 119, 158–159, 168
North American Free Trade Area 53
Norway 133, 151, 164
NRF XXXI
Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty 146
Nuclear Suppliers Group XXXI, 153
Nuclear Test Ban Treaty 124, 126, 148–149
OCHA XXXI, 121
ODA XXXI, 105, 118–119
OECD XXXI, 55, 105, 177–179
Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights XXXI, XXXII, 33, 80
ONUB XXXII
OOSA XXXII, 129
OPEC XXXI
Organization of American States XXXI, 59
Index

OSCE XXXII, 25, 30, 33–34, 37, 40–41, 43–44, 75–82, 84, 90, 92, 152, 155, 164, 192
OSCE Centre 79
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly 82
ÖSD XXXII, 193
Ottawa Convention 151–152
Pakistan XXXII, XXXIII, 24, 67–68, 148, 158, 162
Palestinian National Authority 29
Palestinian Territories XXIV, 109, 160
Partnership and Cooperation Agreement XXXIII, 38
Partnership for Peace XXXIII, 38, 74–75
peacekeeping operations 74, 129, 140
Peru XVIII, 55, 57, 59, 90, 125, 151, 166
Philippines XXX, 70–71
PIAAC XXXIII, 179
PISA XXXIII, 179
Poland XXXIII, 10, 23, 75, 81, 88, 140, 180, 183, 189, 191
POPs XXXIII
preliminary ruling proceedings 13
Prevlaka Bay 32
Progress Report 4, 12, 52
protection of children 82, 131, 155, 165–166, 174
PSC XXXIV
Qatar 46, 48, 115, 127, 132, 183
RAMSI 73
Republic of Austria 7, 11, 13, 98, 101, 190, 192
Republic of Korea 66–67, 71, 101, 126, 150, 160
Republic of Kosovo 32, 37
Response Force XXXI
return of refugees 4, 33, 46
Romania 5–6, 9, 23, 87, 94–95, 120, 190–191
Rome Statute 174–175
Rotterdam Convention 182
Rwanda XXIV, XXV, XXVII, XXXIV, 26, 59, 62, 108, 113, 125, 131, 158
SAARC XXXIV, 72
SADC XXXIV, 65, 108, 112
safeguard measures 5
SALW XXXIV, 81, 152
Salzburg 17, 23–24, 89, 102, 189
Salzburg Group 24
Schengen expansion 23–24
Schengen Information System XXXV, 24
screening reports 4
SEECP XXXIV, 7
Serbia XXI, XXXIV, XXXV, 6, 27, 32–33, 35–37, 77, 84–85, 88, 95, 110, 113, 115, 164, 171, 177, 184–185
SESAR XXXV
SICA XXXV, 58
Sierra Leone XXXVII, XXXVIII, 59, 64, 106, 125, 139–141
Singapore 71, 142
Slovakia 23, 86, 88–99, 92–93, 98, 101, 114, 190
Slovenia 4, 9, 23, 32, 47, 50, 52, 88–89, 93, 98–99, 101, 114, 125, 154, 164, 178, 185, 194
Solvability 2
Somalia XV, XVI, XXVII, XXXVI, 25, 27, 60, 65, 125, 137, 171
South Africa 61, 65, 102, 109, 112, 125, 131, 146, 161, 164, 178, 185, 191, 197
South-East Asia 172
South Eastern Europe 77
Southern Africa XIX, 61, 65, 108, 167
Special Court for Sierra Leone XXXIV, 63
Stabilisation and Association Agreement XXXIV, 5
Stabilisation and Association Process XXXIV, 5
Strategic Partnership XXXIII, 57, 66, 68
Strategy to Combat Terrorism 24
Swaziland 59, 61
Switzerland XV, 23, 89–90, 93, 99–100, 102, 115, 164, 184, 194
TACIS XXXVI, 6, 38
Tajikistan XXXIX, 44, 79, 152, 159
Tanzania XVII, XX, 26, 59, 65, 117
TEC XXXVI, 22–23, 52
TEN XXXVI
Terrorism XVI, XX, XXXVI, 24–25, 81, 130–131, 173
terrorist attacks 24, 68, 97, 200
TEU XXXVI

217
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TGF XXXVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand XXXIII, 69, 71, 90, 97, 164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timor-Leste XXXVIII, 70, 135, 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement XXXVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transatlantic Consumer Dialogue XXXVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treaty of Lisbon 7–10, 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tsunami 120, 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey III, 3–4, 6, 45, 85, 95, 131, 154, 171, 191, 198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twinning projects 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UEFA EURO 2008 89, 184, 193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Umweltschutz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– VN-Klimarahmenkonvention (UNFCCC). Siehe Vereinte Nationen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– VN-Konvention zur Bekämpfung der Wüstenbildung (UNCCD). Siehe Vereinte Nationen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMA XXXVI, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMI XXXVI, 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNAMID XXXVII, 136, 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCCD XXXVII, 182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCITRAL XXXVII, 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN-CMCoord XXXVII, 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP XXXVII, 116, 119, 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNECE XXXVII, 142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEO XXXVII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNEP XXXVII, 119, 181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO XIX, XXXVII, 84, 145, 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFCCC XXXVII, 183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNFPA XXXVII, 117, 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGASS XXXVII, 171–172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR XXXVII, 122, 170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF XXXVII, 117, 119–120, 152, 165, 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDO XXXVII, 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFEM XXXVII, 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIFIL XXXVIII, 132, 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union for the Mediterranean 47–48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of Islamic Courts XXXVI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom 47, 87, 102, 131, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States of America 49, 131, 142, 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Universal Postal Union XXXIX, 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMEE XXXVIII, 60, 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIK XXXVIII, 27, 37, 140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIL XXXVIII, 63, 139–140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIN XXXVIII, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIS XXXVIII, 137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMIT XXXVIII, 70, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOCI XXXVIII, 63, 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNODA XXXVIII, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNODC XXXVIII, 171–173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOGIS XXXVIII, 64, 139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOSEK XXXVIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Peacebuilding Commission 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRWA XXXVIII, 46, 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN Secretary-General 37, 69, 168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO XVIII, 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA 47, 49–54, 66–68, 72, 75, 78, 80, 90, 98, 102, 126, 133, 150, 161–163, 176, 191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verification mechanism 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures 81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam 71, 119, 131, 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violenceagainst Children 162, 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa Waiver Program XXXIX, 52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VOIP 206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSAT XXXIX, 206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wassenaar Arrangement XXXIX, 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Africa XXXV, XXXVI, XXXVIII, 63, 107, 117, 152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkan countries 3, 5–6, 99, 143, 154, 194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkans 4, 6, 24–25, 32, 88–89, 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western European Union XXXIX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO XXXIX, 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Bank 105, 107, 113, 144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Health Organization XXXIX, 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Meteorological Organization XXXIX, 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Radiocommunication Conference XXXIX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Index

World Tourism Organization XXXIX, 146
WSIS XL
WTO XL, 31, 38, 42, 52, 71–72, 90, 118, 176–177
Zanger Committee XL, 153
ZERP XL, 32
Zimbabwe XL, 25–26, 59, 61, 65, 109, 125
Austria and the World

- Neighbourhood Policy, Regional Partnership, Cooperation in the Danube Region and in the Black Sea Region, South Eastern Europe, Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region
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