Foreign Policy Report

2009

Report by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
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Foreign Policy Report

2009

Report by the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
In the foreign policy sphere, the year 2009 was marked by the manifold tasks and activities the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs performs in the service of our country. Particular highlights included Austria’s proactive and successful work as a member of the United Nations Security Council, the 30th anniversary of Vienna as one of the UN headquarters as well as Austria’s positive track record after 15 years of European Union membership. We succeeded in initiating a number of important activities in regions that have traditionally been of particular concern to Austria – the Western Balkans and the Danube region. Furthermore, we successfully set course towards a region that will figure very prominently on Austria’s foreign policy agenda over the next few years – the Black Sea region with its unique potential for the future. The events marking the year 2009 have made it very clear again: Austria’s contribution to the world is both greatly respected and in high demand. Filled with self-confidence by this international recognition we may therefore continue to actively shape the European and foreign policy that will lead Austria through the 21st century.

Austria’s election as a non-permanent member to the United Nations Security Council for the period 2009/2010 – the third after 1973/74 and 1991/92 – was an expression of confidence in our long-standing and broadly appreciated commitment within the United Nations. In this most important forum for international peace and security, Austria assumes responsibility as a member of the international community. Since the very beginning of its membership of the UN Security Council, Austria has made the rule of law a focus of its work. In this context, Austria has attached special priority to improving the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Indeed, our ambitious approach in this respect has born fruit. The unanimous adoption of the relevant Security Council resolution 1894 during Austria’s Presidency of the Security Council in November 2009 means that we have already achieved very tangible and encouraging progress towards reaching this objective. Among further topics that rank high on the agenda of our work within the Security Council is our active commitment to ensuring protection and respect for human rights and humanitarian international law, strengthening the role of women in peace initiatives, disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as well as fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue.

The importance Austrian foreign policy attaches to the United Nations was clearly demonstrated by the celebrations hosted in honour of the 30th anni-
versary of Vienna as one of the UN headquarters. The participation of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in these festivities testified to the recognition Vienna as the host city and Austria’s long-standing work enjoy within the United Nations. Over the past 30 years, Austria has succeeded in consolidating and further strengthening its role as UN headquarters and competence centre for security issues. The tasks of the Vienna-based UN organisations and agencies, including the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have further gained in importance. Vienna has evolved into an important lynchpin in the international security architecture, enjoying an excellent reputation as a venue for international dialogue. It is thus an important concern of mine to ensure that Vienna will not only retain its standing as an international hub but will further enhance and expand its role in this regard.

One month before the 15th anniversary of Austria’s accession to the European Union, the Treaty of Lisbon came into force on 1 December. This EU Reform Treaty constitutes a sound and sustainable basis for the European Union’s future work. Among the amendments brought about by the Treaty, those relating to foreign policy are of particular significance. The enhanced role of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the establishment of the European External Action Service will thus enable us to speak more frequently with one European voice on the international stage.

Notwithstanding such modifications, the Union’s common policy does not strive to take the place of its Member States’ individual foreign policies but rather aims to act as a meaningful complement. Austria will continue to consistently pursue its distinctive foreign and European policy as well as the role it plays in the international sphere. In this context, we strongly support the accelerated approximation of the Western Balkan countries to the EU. Together with my Romanian counterpart I initiated an EU Strategy for the Danube Region at the beginning of 2009, which will enable us to work even more closely with our neighbours in this important region. In the meantime, this Austro-Romanian initiative has developed into an EU core project. Particularly for us Austrians, the Danube region is a potential engine for growth, with the River Danube as our connecting link. The Danube is not only symbolic of Europe growing together, but is also part of our European identity.

A further priority I will be adding to our active neighbourhood policy agenda is the Black Sea Region. The huge potential for the future this region has to offer Europe in terms of economic development, human resources and culture must be used in a targeted manner to the benefit of all.

Especially during this time of economic crisis, Austrians sense how important it is to be firmly embedded in a strong community that has the ability to take action. At the same time, a lingering feeling of scepticism towards the EU is still perceptible in Austria and criticism has been voiced about developments within the EU. With this in mind, I seek to actively engage in targeted,
direct contact and face to face discussions with as many citizens as possible. My “EU Listening and Dialogue Tour”, which took me across the Austrian federal provinces, has clearly shown that direct and honest dialogue is the most effective means of countering EU scepticism. Based on what I heard and learned during these discussions and meetings, I put together a package of measures aimed at encouraging dialogue on Europe within Austria. On Europe Day 2009, I presented this package, which will form the basis for further efforts in this area, to the Federal Government. In order to consistently maintain this momentum of dialogue on Europe in Austria, I have embarked on my current “EU Dialogue Tour” that is again taking me through the federal provinces.

In 2009, Austria’s international cultural policy was dominated by events marking the historical turning point of 1989. Under the heading of “Europe 1989 – 2009. Divided – Reunited: Start into a New Europe”, we launched an initiative to illustrate the importance of this year of historic changes in shaping our European identity as well as its effects on our self-image and self-confidence as Europeans. By organising a large number of events focusing on the topic, we succeeded in raising awareness of the significance of the fall of the Iron Curtain, particularly amongst young people who of course have no memories of a divided Europe. With its integrative potential, art is sometimes a step ahead of politics, conceiving connections nobody would have thought possible and enabling new approaches to cooperation and living together. It is in this, as in many other respects too, that international cultural policy creates a win-win situation for all involved.

Providing assistance to Austrians who find themselves in difficulties while abroad and making available services to Austrians abroad are central tasks fulfilled by Ministry staff in their daily work. The range of services provided by the Citizens’ Help Desk ranges from individual consular assistance to activities aimed at protecting Austrians faced with crisis or disaster. With extraordinary idealism and great dedication, Ministry staff do an excellent job, sometimes under difficult and even dangerous conditions.

Countering poverty and its negative impact on peace, security and the environment, as well as its particularly dire consequences for each individual affected, is one of the most demanding and at the same time most pressing challenges of our time. Austria with its comprehensive expertise is committed to contributing to reducing suffering and poverty worldwide through its development cooperation activities. In this context, our main focus is on rural development, ensuring water supply, energy efficiency, climate protection and education. With regard to development cooperation, it is not only the provision of funding that counts, but primarily the quality of the projects this funding is provided for, the commitment of those involved and the extensive know-how Austrian Development Cooperation has acquired over the years. A key concern of mine in this respect is enhanced collaboration among all ministries involved as well as an increased level of coherence
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– since development cooperation is a responsibility that lies with the Federal Government as a whole.

In conclusion, I would like to express my thanks to Secretary-General Johannes Kyrle as well as all employees at headquarters in Vienna and at the Austrian representations abroad for their dedication and their team spirit. It is only with this high level of commitment shown by staff on a day to day basis that the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is able to successfully fulfil the manifold tasks carried out in the service of our country and its citizens.

Dr. Michael Spindelegger

Federal Minister for European and International Affairs
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XVI
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I. The Financial Crisis and the Response by the European Union

The financial and economic crisis has faced the global economy with serious challenges and led to the most serious recession since the 1930s. The bankruptcy of the American investment bank Lehman Brothers in September 2008 triggered a shock wave across the global financial system that soon spilled over to the real economy impacting employment. In coping with the crisis the EU and its Member States have taken a wide range of extraordinary measures, including the European Economic Recovery Plan of December 2008 and short-term measures to support the banking sector. Building on these packages, a number of follow-up activities aimed at stabilising the economy and reforming the banking sector were launched with a view to preventing any further escalation of the crisis, including:

– Reform of the financial market supervision system at European level involving the creation of three new European supervisory agencies for the banking, insurance and securities sectors based in Frankfurt, London and Paris respectively. The new EU authorities are charged with ensuring that the rules agreed upon at EU level are observed, mediating in cross-border conflicts, adopting binding technical supervision standards and overseeing specific financial institutions – including rating agencies –, that are active across the Union.

– Along with these three new EU agencies, a European Systemic Risk Board will be created. Furthermore, cooperation with national supervisory authorities will be stepped up (approval by the European Parliament in 2010).

– Continuation of work in the fields of equity requirements, compensation practices (managers’ salaries), countering procyclicality in the banking sector in coordination with the proposals made by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (further proposals by the European Commission to be presented in 2010).

– Definition of a coordinated and orderly “exit strategy” from the short-term support measures for the banking sector and stimulus packages, accompanied by a concrete timeline for the consolidation of national budgets.

– Continuation of the debate on transparency in tax matters based on the package of anti-fraud agreements with third countries as well as amendments to the interest payment, mutual administrative assistance and collection directives. (Savings Taxation Directive, Directive on mutual assistance in tax matters, Tax Collection Directive).

Confidence in the markets has returned, the economic situation is slowly stabilising and in its autumn forecast the European Commission predicts a
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return to stronger growth by 2011, even though a GDP decline of about 4 per cent is to be expected throughout the Union for the full year. However, the gradual recovery of the EU economy and the stabilisation of the financial markets are in fact to a large degree attributable to the comprehensive, temporary budget and monetary policy measures taken by the Member States’ governments, the European Union and the European Central Bank. In analogy to the real economy, principles that provide for proper and well-timed transition from the public support schemes were thus also defined for the financial sector. Based on the deliberations of the EU ministers of finance at the ECOFIN of 10 November, the European Council of 10 and 11 December adopted an exit strategy for the medium-term withdrawal of support measures. On the initiative of Austria, the European Commission was mandated with examining innovative financing opportunities, including a financial transactions tax, in connection with this exit strategy.

The crisis also contributed to exacerbating international tax competition: under the European Commission’s strategy to promote good governance in tax matters, the objective is thus to improve transparency with respect to cooperation in tax matters. The pressure on tax havens and the related fight against tax evasion do not only figure prominently on the EU’s agenda but have increasingly become a focus of attention of both the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the G20, which consider banking secrecy a substantial obstacle to the fight against money laundering and terrorism.

At international level, the G20, in which the EU as a whole as well as individual Member States are represented, has in parallel become a global forum for economic and financial sector reform. At the first two summits, held in Washington on 15 and 16 November 2008 and in London on 1 and 2 April, the following priorities were defined: increased stability within the international financial system by strengthening global cooperation, increasing transparency and reform of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the regional development banks. At the third summit held in Pittsburgh on 24 and 25 September, the work programme was extended by the establishment of a framework for sustainable and balanced growth (climate change financing). With respect to system supervision, global standards need to be developed for subsequent implementation by national authorities. Systemically important financial institutions will be subjected to consistent consolidated supervision and regulation and will have to meet the highest standards. The Financial Stability Board was charged with submitting relevant proposals by the end of 2010. The Financial Stability Board was established at the London G20 summit and assigned a wider scope than its predecessor, the Financial Stability Forum which had been set up by the G7 ministers of finance and central bank governors in 1999. The meeting, moreover, decided that rules for the improvement of equity quantity and quality are to be agreed by the end of 2010 and by 2011 the equity requirements proposed by the
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Basle Committee on Banking Supervision (Basel II) are to be implemented by all G20 financial centres. With respect to compensation practices, the G20 in principle adopted the proposals put forward by the Financial Stability Forum according to which bonus payments are to be tied to long-term performance.

As a result of their heavy dependence on foreign capital and owing to their above-average dependence on exports, the crisis hit most of the Central, Eastern and South Eastern European (CESEE) states even harder than the majority of the old EU Member States (except for Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom which were severely affected by the bursting of the real estate market bubble). These countries’ economic growth was to a large extent credit-funded. The crisis-induced withdrawal of portfolio capital combined with refunding problems on the international markets and the devaluation of national currencies brought a number of countries to the verge of financial collapse. Further worsening of this crisis in many of these countries would also have impacted the EU as a whole, as many banks have system critical exposure in these countries. The share of potentially defaulting loans also holds high potential for risk and according to analysts, the climax in potential defaults had not even been reached at the end of 2009.

II. Enlargement of the European Union

The Union’s approach in the enlargement process is based on the “renewed consensus on enlargement” adopted by the European Council in December 2006 and reaffirmed many times over the past few years. The principles underlying this strategy include the consolidation of commitments entered into, 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 the Communication on the Enlargement Strategy (which also includes the individual states’ progress reports) adopted by the European Commission on 14 October, the global economic crisis, the improvement of the rule of law, the resolution of bilateral conflicts and strengthening regional cooperation were identified as the main challenges for the year 2010. To address these issues, the European Commission presented a multi-dimensional approach which rests on the pillars of ensuring the quality of accession preparations, strengthening civil society, support by financial assistance, cooperation in the fight against climate change and an intensified dialogue with the public on enlargement issues.

With respect to the pre-accession strategy, the main conclusion referred to the European Commission’s assessment that it would be possible to conclude accession negotiations with Croatia in 2010, provided that the country has fulfilled all outstanding conditions as per the schedule. Regarding Turkey, the European Commission noted a certain loss of momentum with regard
to the introduction of reform, but at the same time referred to the positive recent regional and energy policy developments and the strategic importance of the country.

On 16 July, Iceland submitted its application for EU membership and was thus also considered in the European Commission’s Enlargement Strategy. In light of the country’s membership in the European Economic Area and the Schengen system, the European Commission stated that close links with the Union already existed in key areas.

1. Croatia and Turkey

The screening process (examination of whether legislation in the candidate countries complies with the acquis communautaire) for Croatia had already been concluded in 2008 and Croatia succeeded in making substantial headway towards the final phase of membership negotiations. However, due to unresolved border issues between Slovenia and Croatia, membership negotiations remained blocked by Slovenia until the accession conference on 2 October. Only a bilateral agreement concluded by both countries on submitting their dispute to arbitration proceedings was to lead to a de-blocking and got the accession negotiations back off the ground (see A. VI. 3.1.1). Subsequently, negotiations were opened on six chapters: free movement of capital, agriculture and rural development, food security, animal welfare as well as animal and plant health policies, taxes, regional policy and structural instruments including justice, freedom and security. Negotiations were provisionally concluded on ten chapters. Thus, the total number of negotiation chapters opened came to 28 (of 33) while 17 chapters had been closed provisionally. Moreover, the Council set up a working group charged with preparing the accession treaty which started work in December. In its meeting on 7 and 8 December, the General Affairs and External Relations Council acknowledged progress achieved but – as the European Commission stated in its Progress Report – stressed the necessity of effectively implementing the acquis communautaire and complying with the relevant criteria in the fields of justice and public administration, the fight against corruption and organised crime, minority rights and return of refugees. Furthermore, it pointed out the importance of unreserved cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

By adopting a National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis Communautaire and appointing a full-time chief negotiator, Turkey succeeded in reaffirming its commitment to the EU accession process. In its Progress Report, the European Commission acknowledged the efforts undertaken towards achieving normalisation of relations with Armenia. It also referred to Turkey’s positive energy policy development in connection with the signing of the intergovernmental agreement on the construction of the Nabucco natural gas pipeline. Despite these efforts, developments were characterised by a
hesitant pace of reform. In its Progress Report, the European Commission named a large number of areas which still gave cause for concern: freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, trade union legislation, civilian control over security forces, women’s rights and equal treatment of men and women. Turkey was called upon to be more proactive, particularly against impunity of perpetrators in cases of torture and ill-treatment. Progress was also called for in the fields of minority rights. Furthermore, the report called upon Turkey to undertake substantial efforts in terms of judicial and administrative reform and good neighbourly relations. The screening process has already been completed for 23 chapters. For two further chapters – taxes and the environment – negotiations were opened, bringing the number of opened chapters to a total of twelve. The critical attitude in several EU Member States with regard to Turkey’s full accession has led to the exclusion of certain key chapters from the accession negotiations.

No progress was made in the normalisation of neighbourly relations between Turkey and the EU Member State of Cyprus. Turkey still refused to meet its obligation under the Ankara Protocol which has been in place since 1995 and provides for the extension of its customs union with the EU to all Member States which joined the European Union in 2004. The decision taken by the EU foreign ministers in December 2006 to put on ice eight chapters related to this obligation and not to provisionally close any further chapters will thus remain effective.

2. Bulgaria and Romania

Bulgaria and Romania have been Member States of the European Union since 1 January 2007. In order to address existing residual shortcomings in the particularly sensitive sphere of justice and home affairs, a special cooperation and verification mechanism (CVM) was introduced to review compliance with specific criteria (benchmarks). In its report on the progress made in achieving these benchmarks published at the end of July, the European Commission advocated a continuation of the verification mechanism and called upon both countries to take further action in the field of justice, particularly with respect to the fight against corruption and organised crime. Although the European Commission noted a positive change in attitude by both Bulgaria and Romania, it urged both countries to intensify their reform efforts as the benchmarks were still not being fully complied with. The payment of EU funds to Bulgaria, which had been suspended in 2008 because of serious irregularities, was resumed in the course of the year after an improvement in the country’s financial conduct was ascertained.

3. The European Perspective of the Western Balkan Countries

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

The SAAs with Macedonia, Croatia and Albania came into effect on 1 April 2004, 1 February 2005 and 1 April 2009 respectively. The agreements signed with Montenegro on 15 October 2007 and with Bosnia and Herzegovina on 16 June 2008 are currently undergoing ratification. The SAA signed with Serbia on 29 April 2008 was not released for ratification, as some EU Member States assessed the country’s cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague as being not yet sufficient. However, following the respective decisions taken by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 7 and 8 December, the Interim Agreement which covers trade and trade-related issues and has so far been applied unilaterally by Serbia, will come into effect on 1 February 2010. A satisfactory outcome of the stock taking process on the implementation of the SAA obligations (at least those included in the Interim Agreement) by the respective country is the prerequisite for consideration of an application for membership by the EU.

The start of accession negotiations with Macedonia, which has held candidate status since 2005, still remained an open issue owing to the unresolved name dispute with Greece.

The applications for membership submitted by Montenegro and Albania (on 15 December 2008 and 29 April 2009 respectively) were, with a slight delay each, forwarded to the European Commission, which is charged with preparing an opinion. This involves an in depth assessment of the question as to how far the country applying for membership is actually capable and prepared for entering into membership negotiations. Serbia submitted an application for EU membership on 19 December.

Provided all criteria are fulfilled, Austria regards the accelerated rapprochement of the Western Balkan countries to the EU as one of its foreign policy priorities. In this spirit, Austria welcomed the entry into effect of visa liberalisation for Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia on 19 December, with Albania as well as Bosnia and Herzegovina to follow provided that and as soon as they have fulfilled the strict visa liberalisation criteria.

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 regional cooperation and administrative partnership projects (EU twinning) under the IPA, 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. In 2009, the geographical focus of Austrian twinning activities was on Croatia and Serbia with five and four projects respectively, as well as on Bulgaria and Romania – which under the transition facility were still able to benefit from this instrument – with three projects each out of a total of 27 projects assigned to Austria. The project volume amounted to about 29.6 million euros which is less than in previous years owing to the discontinuation of twinning activities in the new Member States where Austria has traditionally been particularly successful.

As the international economic crisis has negatively impacted the Western Balkan countries’ pace of reforms, the EU strives to sustain the current process of enlargement by providing an incentive for political and economic reform. In this context, particular emphasis is placed on building up governmental administrative structures and promoting the rule of law, which is also reflected in the increased number of project tenders in these areas.

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. As successor to the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe, the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC), which is based in Sarajevo and headed by the Croatian Hido Biščević, strove to promote and press for individual responsibility to be assumed by the countries in the region. The RCC’s focal spheres of activity include economic and social development, infrastructure and energy, justice and home affairs, security cooperation, education and research as well as parliamentary cooperation. The EU and some of its Member States, including Austria, provide content-related and financial support for the RCC’s work and have a seat and vote on the organisation’s administrative board.

III. The Ratification Process of the Treaty of Lisbon

The Treaty of Lisbon which entered into force on 1 December amends the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, which has been renamed Treaty on the Functioning of
the European Union. These amendments to the treaties that have laid the foundation for European integration represent the most comprehensive step towards further institutional development the European Union has taken to date. They aim to create a more transparent, more democratic and more efficient Union which is closer to its citizens.

The following examples serve to give but a brief overview of these amendments.

The European Parliament was strengthened and equipped with enhanced rights placing it on an equal footing with the Council as legislator; the so-called co-decision procedure was made a rule and its application was extended to most policy areas. Likewise, the Member States’ national parliaments have more opportunities to be involved in the work of the EU. Even more care is taken to ensure that the Union only acts where results can be better attained at EU level. Observance of this principle of subsidiarity is subject to enhanced control by a newly introduced mechanism. Together with the strengthened role to be played by the European Parliament, it will enhance democracy and increase legitimacy in the functioning of the Union. The interests of the individual Members States, of the Union as a whole and of the EU citizens will be considered in a more balanced manner than before.

Under the European Citizens’ Initiative, one million citizens from a “substantial number of Member States” have the possibility to call on the Commission to bring forward new policy proposals.

The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, which was signed in 2007, is now legally binding, ensuring better legal protection of citizens whenever EU law is applied.

The Treaty of Lisbon simplifies working methods and makes them more efficient. Qualified majority voting in the Council is extended to new policy areas to ensure faster and more efficient decision-making processes. The reform treaty also creates more stable and streamlined institutions. The Treaty creates the function of President of the European Council whose term in office is two and a half years and can be extended once. The first President thus elected was the Belgian Herman Van Rompuy, who conducts all EU summits and strives to reach agreement on difficult issues.

In an effort to ensure that Europe as a global player has all the necessary instruments at its disposal, all of Europe’s external policy tools required for developing and reaching decisions on new policies have been combined. The clearest example of this is seen in the creation of the office of the EU High Representative for the Union in Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which is currently held by Catherine Ashton, succeeding both Javier Solana and Benita Ferrero-Waldner. She also holds the position of Vice-President of the European Commission. A special diplomatic corps, the newly created European External Action Service will support the High Representative. This new concept thus combines the resources of both the Member States and the
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Union’s bodies. The steps taken will ensure that the long-standing call for a Union that speaks with one voice on the foreign policy stage and adopts a coherent approach in all aspects of its foreign policy actions can be met more effectively.

By the beginning of the year, 23 Member States had ratified the Treaty of Lisbon and deposited their ratification instruments in Rome. Germany, Ireland, Poland and the Czech Republic ratified the Treaty in the course of the year.

In Germany, the Federal Constitutional Court took decisions on a number of motions against the Treaty of Lisbon on 30 June. The claimants doubted inter alia that the adoption of the Treaty was compatible with the German constitution claiming that it restricted the powers of the German Parliament. In its ruling, the Federal Constitutional Court stated that the Treaty was compatible with the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, although it was necessary to extend Parliament’s participation rights before ratification was possible. Following the drafting and adoption of the relevant accompanying legislation by the Bundestag (Lower House of the German Parliament) and the Bundesrat (Upper House of the German Parliament), German President Köhler ratified the Treaty on 22 September.

Following the negative outcome of the referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon held in Ireland in June 2008, the EU took account of the specific concerns of the Irish population in its decisions taken at the December 2008 European Council. The Union thus stipulated that the Member States will continue to nominate one member of the EU Commission each and that Ireland will receive respective commitments and clarifications. In June, the European Council adopted the relevant wording and confirmed that the guarantees given to Ireland will be legally enshrined as a Protocol to the Treaty at the next accession round. This decision became effective on the day the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force. At the second referendum held on 2 October, the Irish electorate approved the treaty. With a voter turnout of 58 per cent, around 67 per cent of the Irish voted in favour while some 33 per cent voted against the treaty. The Irish President Mary McAleese subsequently signed the Lisbon Treaty’s ratification instrument on 14 October.

In Poland, President Kaczynski made his readiness to ratify the treaty dependent on the positive outcome of the Irish referendum. Shortly after the referendum had taken place in Ireland he thus signed the ratification instrument on 10 October.

In the Czech Republic, the Chamber of Deputies (Lower House of Parliament) approved the treaty on 18 February and the Senate on 6 May. Subsequently, however, several senators lodged a complaint with the Constitutional Court. This led President Vaclav Klaus to make the signing of the ratification instrument dependent on the outcome of this constitutional challenge and the Irish referendum. Although the Czech Constitutional Court had dismissed the complaint, President Klaus continued to refuse to sign the ratification instru-
ment stating that he feared that the European Court of Justice could interpret the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights in a way that might also affect issues from the past. The European Council of 29 and 30 October thus agreed that the Czech Republic, just as was the case with the United Kingdom and Poland, should be granted a limited opt-out concerning enforceability in courts of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. Shortly afterwards the Czech Constitutional Court passed another positive ruling on the treaty, upon which President Klaus signed the ratification instrument on 3 November. Should the Czech government so wish, the provisions on the enforceability of the Charter of Fundamental Rights in the Czech Republic would be included in due course by way of a protocol which is to be ratified by all Member States. Until then, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union shall be applicable without restriction also in the Czech Republic.

After the last of the 27 Member States had deposited its ratification instrument for the Treaty of Lisbon in Rome on the 13 November, the treaty entered into force on 1 December.

IV. European Information Activities

In line with its commitment to provide citizens with comprehensive information, thus contributing to creating a better understanding of the EU, the FMEIA organised a number of events and initiatives. In this context, particular focus was placed on organising discussion events and promoting dialogue and discussions about Europe.

The kick-off event for the EU Listening and Dialogue Tour of Federal Minister Spindelegger was held in the monastery of Seitenstetten on 21 January. Federal Minister Spindelegger embarked on this tour to meet as many people as possible in all parts of the country and discuss their worries and concerns with them in person. In this spirit he participated in a discussion event held in Graz on 18 February before his Listening and Dialogue Tour took him to Innsbruck on 6 March. On 12 March, he discussed European issues at two schools in Vienna and on 18 March with employees of the Wiener Linien (Vienna public transport provider). Further events organised as part of his Listening and Dialogue Tour took him to Salzburg on 2 April and Güssing on 23 April, followed by Linz on 29 April. At the final event held at the Vienna Museumsquartier on 6 May, Federal Minister Spindelegger took positive stock of the series of events. The tour had shown that young Austrians have above average interest in the EU whilst at the same time there remains a growing need for information. With this in mind, the exhibition and discussion initiative “Die EU und Du” (the EU and You), which is jointly organised by the FMEIA and the Österreichische Gesellschaft für Europapolitik (Austrian Society for European Policy), was continued. In this traveling exhibition, which was put together specifically for schools, both history and current developments in the EU are displayed in a clear and transparent
manner showing pictures and providing further information on topical EU issues. Furthermore, numerous events were organised at schools across Austria where FMEIA experts informed pupils first hand of the daily processes and procedures involved in European policymaking. An evaluation undertaken by FMEIA staff of the visits paid to schools so far showed that a clear majority (85%) of pupils considered EU membership “a good thing”.

The topics that figured most prominently in the discussions were the elections to the European Parliament on 7 June, the effects of the Treaty of Lisbon and the measures taken by the EU to counter the economic crisis.

Building-up on the successful Listening and Dialogue Tour, Federal Minister Spindelegger subsequently embarked on an EU Dialogue Tour to actively engage with citizens in further discussions on issues relating to the EU. After a first joint event held with Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in St. Pölten on 23 November, the EU Dialogue Tour was continued in Salzburg on 25 November and in Graz on 26 November. Besides members of the government, leading personalities from the spheres of business, culture, science and sports participated in these events to discuss the opportunities and possibilities Europe offers its citizens.

The traditional **Open House** organised on Austrian National Day (26 October) again attracted large numbers of interested visitors and the EU-related information material was received with much interest. Furthermore, EU experts among the FMEIA staff were available to answer questions and talk to interested visitors.

Under the EU Management Partnership, the FMEIA together with other ministries and the representations of the European Commission and the European Parliament in Austria developed strategies and projects to improve EU communication. **EUROBAROMETER** surveys carried out at the end of the year showed that the Austrians’ attitude towards the EU had become more positive. This is also an encouraging sign showing that the Ministry’s efforts towards ensuring citizens are as well informed as possible are indeed proving effective.

V. **Austria in the European Institutions**

1. **Austrian Representatives in the EU Bodies**

From the middle of November 2004 until the end of November 2009, Benita Ferrero-Waldner was the Commission Member responsible for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, and afterwards for Trade and European Neighbourhood Policy. Although the mandate of the Barroso I Commission actually expired on 31 October, it was extended temporarily owing to the delays in the ratification process for the Lisbon Treaty. Had a new Commission been installed before the treaty’s entry into force it would
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have been necessary to reduce its size in line with legal provisions in effect at the time.

Upon entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission Catherine Ashton took over the foreign policy portfolio from Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner, who assumed responsibility for Trade and European Neighbourhood Policy until the Barroso II Commission was appointed.

As successor to Franz Fischler and Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Austrian Federal Government nominated Federal Minister Johannes Hahn as Member of the European Commission on 27 October. On 5 November, the Main Committee of the Austrian National Council confirmed his nomination and on 27 November the President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso announced that under the planned allocation of portfolios he was designating Johannes Hahn as Commissioner for the key area of Regional Policy.

On average, 442 Austrians (204 women and 238 men) held posts in the European Commission in 2009, which is equivalent to a share of approximately 1.8 per cent of the Commission’s total staff.

On 6 October, Peter Jann terminated his long-standing activity as judge at the European Court of Justice and was replaced in this function by former Federal Minister and Member of the European Parliament, Maria Berger. Josef Azizi is a judge at the Court of First Instance of the European Communities (CFIEC). Furthermore, Gertrude Tumpel-Gugerell has been the Austrian member on the Executive Board of the European Central Bank since 2003. Hubert Weber is a member of Audit Group I “Preservation and Management of Natural Resources” at the European Court of Auditors.

2. European Parliament (EP)

The 17 Austrian Members of the European Parliament were elected by direct vote on 7 June. Until 2013, the Austrian seats for the EP’s current legislative period are thus distributed as follows among the political parties: six European People’s Party and European Democrats, four Social Democratic Group, two the Greens and Free European Alliance, and five independent MPs (three from the Hans-Peter Martin’s List and two from the Freedom Party). Voter turnout throughout the EU averaged 43 per cent, while in Austria it was 46 per cent.

Based on the Conclusions adopted by the European Council meetings of December 2008 and June 2009, the Spanish government submitted a proposal for the amendment of the Treaties as regards transitional measures concerning the composition of the European Parliament. On 11 December 2009, the European Council decided to consult the European Parliament and the
Commission with a view to having the proposal examined as soon as possible and agreed on convening an intergovernmental conference.

3. The Committee of the Regions

The Committee of the Regions is a consultative body and as such provides a forum for the representation of regional and local interests in connection with European integration. The Committee is composed of representatives of the Member States’ regional and local authorities and prepares its opinions in a total of five thematic commissions. Austria is represented by twelve members. The Austrian delegation is composed of seven provincial governors, the President of the Provincial Parliament of the Federal Province of Tyrol Herwig Van Staa, the Representative of the Salzburg Region to the Committee of the Regions Franz Schausberger, three representatives of the Austrian Association of Cities and Towns and the Association of Municipalities.

4. European Economic and Social Council

The European Economic and Social Council (EESC) is a consultative body that involves economic and social interest groups in the EU’s legislative process. The EESC’s 344 members are subdivided into the Workers’ Group, the Employers’ Group and the Various Interests’ Group and there are six thematic sections. Austria has twelve members in the Economic and Social Council.

5. Court of Justice of the European Union

The Republic of Austria is represented before the Court of Justice of the European Union (ECJ), (consisting of the Court and the Court of First Instance) by legal counsels from the Constitutional Service of the Federal Chancellery. In 2009, Austrian courts initiated 14 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).

At the end of 2009, eight proceedings for alleged infringements of Union law were pending against the Republic of Austria. These infringement proceedings concern the implementation of the Common VAT System Directive regarding reduced rates on certain live animals (in particular horses), the inclusion of Austrian standard consumption tax (payable on car purchase) in the assessment basis, implementation of Directive 2006/43/EC on statutory audits of annual accounts and consolidated accounts, the implementation of Directive 2006/24/EC on the retention of data generated or processed in connection with the provision of publicly available electronic communications services, introduction of a sectoral driving ban (Tyrol), the inadequate implementation of the Birds’ Directive, the nationality requirement for notaries, minimum selling prices for cigarettes and fine-cut rolling tobacco.
In five proceedings the Court of Justice issued a judgement establishing an infringement of Union law by the Republic of Austria. These judgements concerned regulations imposed by the Medical Chamber of Upper Austria regarding an obligation on every medical doctor practising 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 and access to the profession of patent attorney.

Two infringement proceedings against the Republic of Austria were discontinued by the European Commission, one relating to the alleged failure of Austria to transpose Directive 2003/18/EC (asbestos at work and protection of workers) and the adaptation of certain directives relating to the free movement of persons with regard to the accession of Romania and Bulgaria to the European Union.

In one case, the complaint against the Republic of Austria was withdrawn by the European Commission. This specific case related to the non-implementation of two directives in the field of fish health: Directive 2006/88/EC on animal health requirements for aquaculture animals (VV 08/0483) and Directive 2008/53/EC regarding spring viraemia of carp (VV 08/0626).

VI. National Cooperation between Government, Parliament and the Federal Provinces

The cooperation between Government and Parliament in matters relating to European integration is based on the participation 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 in the case of 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 must 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.

On 28 October, the Main Committee of the National Council on Matters relating to the European Union passed a **formal opinion as defined under Article 23e of the Federal Constitutional Act** on the introduction of a financial transactions tax at EU level. The same Committee also adopted **committee opinions** on issues related to the economic and financial crisis (17 March) and the European citizens’ initiative (28 October).

The Standing Sub-Committee of the National Council on Matters relating to the EU adopted legally non-binding **committee statements** on the following topics:

- Continued application of the transitional arrangement on the freedom of movement of persons and services for the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia in the third phase (5 March);
- Ban on planting genetically modified organisms (26 March);
- Nuclear Energy (26 March);
- Future of the common EU asylum strategy and its concrete implementation (17 April);
- Right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings (17 September);
- Stockholm Programme – an area of freedom, security and justice at the service of European citizens (20 October).

The Committee of the Federal Council on Matters relating to the EU adopted legally non-binding **committee statements** on the following topics:

- Fingerprint data, applications for international protection, minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers (3 February);
- Quality and safety standards for certain human organs intended for transplantation (3 February);
- Environmental public procurement and charging heavy goods vehicles for the use of certain infrastructures (6 May);
- Combating sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography (3 June);
- Protection of workers from risk related to exposure to asbestos at work (3 June);
- Combating late payment in commercial transactions (21 July);
- Right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings (3 September);
- Stockholm Programme (20 October);
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- Jurisdiction, applicable law, mutual recognition and the enforcement of judgements and public instruments in succession and inheritance matters and the introduction of a European certificate of inheritance (1 December).

Debates with the designated Austrian EU Commissioner Federal Minister Johannes Hahn were held on 5 November in the Main Committee of the National Council and on 1 December in the Federal Council Committee on matters relating to the European Union.

The participation rights of the provinces and municipalities laid down in Article 23d of the Federal Constitutional Act include the right to be notified of and comment on issues falling within their sphere of responsibility, analogous to the rights of the National and Federal Councils.

Under the system governing the participation of the federal provinces in the internal decision-making process on EU proposals (EU-Länderbeteiligungsverfahren), a total of 26 joint statements, twice as many as in the previous year, were submitted. Furthermore, in 2009 the federal provinces submitted three joint statements in line with Article 23d par. 2 of the Federal Constitutional Act on the following topics:

- Proposal by the European Commission for a Directive on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare;
- European Commission Request for Information to Austria on the conservation and management of the brown bear population in Austria;
- Second statement on the proposal for a Directive on the application of patients’ rights in cross-border healthcare.

Austria’s positions in the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) 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-forming process in Austria.

Since November 2004, the individual ministries have submitted reports on their working programme and planned legislation at EU level to Parliament at the 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.

VII. The Policies of the European Union

1. Economy and Finance

The European Commission published its Autumn Forecast for the 2009–2011 period on 3 November. The key message is that the recession is over but major challenges continue to persist. The outlook thus assumes a GDP
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decline of 4 per cent for the whole year, while its gradual recovery should start to take effect in 2010 and 2011 with predicted growth of between \( \frac{3}{4} \) per cent and 1\( \frac{1}{2} \) per cent. The pick-up is however, not only attributable to improved global economic conditions and a recovery of the financial markets, but is also due to the large-scale budget and monetary policy actions launched by national governments, the central banks and the EU. The economic data for 2009 are encouraging, despite the economic slump experienced the previous year. However, some of the factors that have driven this recovery are only of a temporary nature.

The negative effects of the financial and economic crisis hit all EU Member States, albeit to differing degrees depending inter alia on the status of their individual financial sector, external trade inter-relations and the existence of real estate bubbles.

2. Employment and Social Policy

The main topics dealt with under the EU employment and social policy were on the one hand the economic crisis, its impacts on employment and the social situation, and the preparations for the EU 2020 Strategy (post Lisbon 2010) on the other.

In its meetings on 19 and 20 March, 18 and 19 June as well as 29 and 30 October, the European Council confirmed the fight against unemployment as one of its primary objectives, paid special attention to the social impacts of the crisis and stressed the important role social protection systems play as automatic stabilisers. In its meeting on 10 and 11 December, the European Council stated that national and European support activities had been of decisive importance in dampening the crisis’ impact on growth and employment.

The decisions taken at Council meetings on 9 March, 8 June and 30 November inter alia strengthen the role of the European Social Fund (ESF) in combating the crisis by speeding up procedures and frontloading funding. Moreover, procedures at the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF), established in 2006, were simplified to turn the EGF into a more effective instrument for early intervention in the EU’s crisis management activities. Together with the EU Social Protection Committee (SPC), the European Commission conducted regular monitoring of the social impacts of the crisis and national policy responses, the joint assessment of which was submitted to the Council.

At the informal meeting of employment and social affairs ministers held in Jönköping on 8 and 9 July, the Swedish Presidency made the future of the Lisbon Strategy the main focus of discussions; at the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 30 November, Conclusions on “promoting labour market inclusion – recovering from the crisis and preparing for the post-2010 Lisbon strategy” were adopted.
With respect to **coordinating social security**, Council and European Parliament have agreed on a new implementation regulation for the basic regulation 883/04 on the coordination of social security systems and their annexes. The new regulations are thus applicable from 1 May 2010.

Political agreement was reached on the **Directive on Equal Treatment of Women and Men engaged in an Activity in a Self-employed Capacity** at first reading on 30 November. Furthermore, political agreement was reached on a **Framework Agreement on Parental Leave** and on repealing the Parental Leave Directive 96/34/EC.

Conciliation procedure negotiations on a **proposal for amending the working time directive** failed in spring.

### 3. Structural and Cohesion Policy

Since the Single European Act of 1986, structural and cohesion policy has been one of the **European Union’s central policy areas**. It aims to strengthen social and economic cohesion in the Union by the targeted strengthening of economically weaker regions.

Following its enlargement by eight Central and Eastern European countries as well as Cyprus and Malta on 1 May 2004, the European Union’s cohesion policy was subjected to a thorough revision process. Three new “objectives” or priorities have been in force since 2007, and were thus defined: Objective “Convergence” (previously: Objective 1), Objective “Regional Competitiveness and Employment” (previously: Objective 2) and Objective “Territorial Cooperation” (new). Cohesion policy was also geared more strongly to the goals of the Lisbon agenda (innovation, growth, jobs) and the Gothenburg goal (sustainable development). For the budget period 2007–13, the European Council made available a total of 307.6 billion euros for structural and cohesion policy. Of this amount a share of 81.7 per cent is earmarked for convergence regions, 15.8 per cent for regions belonging to the regional competitiveness and employment category and 2.44 per cent for territorial cooperation. Publishing the Green Paper on Territorial Cohesion on 10 October 2008, the European Commission initiated a new consultation process on the further development of structural and regional policy for the period after 2013 which contributes substantially to the debate on the future of cohesion policy from 2014 onwards. Austria submitted its statement on 29 February prior to conclusion of the consultation process.

The future of **structural and cohesion policy**, which currently makes up about 38 per cent of the EU budget and is thus the largest portion of EU spending besides the Common Agricultural Policy, is closely linked to the negotiations starting in 2010 on a financial framework 2014+ and the new growth strategy EU-2020, which is to replace the Lisbon Strategy. In this context, a further thorough reform of EU regional and cohesion policy is on
the horizon, indicating a potential concentration of funds on lower-income Member States and a general budget cut for the benefit of new strategic areas of European policy like research, development and innovation, cross-border education, judicial and police cooperation as well as climate and environment-related issues.

Since its accession to the EU on 1 January 1995, Austria has benefited substantially from EU financial support. From 1995 to the end of the funding period 2007–2013, Austria will have received roughly 5 billion euros. In addition to the funds for rural development totalling more than 3.9 billion euros the total sum received by Austria by 2013 will amount to some 8.9 billion euros.

4. Single Market and Industrial Policy

4.1. Single Market

Since 2008, work at implementing the European Commission’s Single Market Review has been an ongoing focus of activities and will continue throughout 2010. Commission President Barroso charged former EU Commissioner Mario Monti with conducting a survey to identify remaining gaps in the Single Market. The survey’s findings will then also form part of the discussion on the follow-up scheme to the current Lisbon Strategy. Moreover, the EU Services Directive had to be transposed into national law by the end of the year. In 2010, the European Commission intends to launch a peer review process aimed at mutually evaluating the implementation of the EU Services Directive in the Member States in order to review its correct implementation and, if necessary, identify further potential for improvement. The European Commission also adopted a recommendation on improvement of the functioning of the Single Market which includes numerous proposals for better governance within the Single Market.

Considerable progress has been made with respect to the implementation of the Better Regulation agenda, which was also recognised by the European Commission in its third strategic review. Beside the extensive work carried out in the fields of simplification and codification, the EU continued its activities towards implementing the EU Action Programme for Reducing Administrative Burdens with a view to reaching its reduction target of minus 25 per cent by 2012. At the beginning of the year, the European Commission included a further 30 legislative acts (in the 13 priority areas) into the programme. In addition, the European Commission continues to submit proposals for reduction activities.

4.2. Industrial Policy

On 28 and 29 May, the Competitiveness Council adopted Conclusions on European industrial policy which not only include horizontal but also sec-
tor-specific measures in the chemicals, electrical and electronic as well as automotive industries.

The horizontal measures provide for the establishment of stable and foreseeable framework conditions for Europe’s industry aimed at promoting innovation and sustainability, legislation based on cost analyses and impact assessment, simplification of administrative procedures for companies, the implementation of the Services Directive, a fully functioning Internal Market, removal of the current liquidity bottlenecks, avoiding trade barriers and using the economic crisis as an opportunity for evolving into a knowledge-based, safe and sustainable, renewable-energy focused, energy-efficient and low-carbon economic area.

The Council also recognised that the European economy was dependent on a number of energy and non-energy raw materials, stressing that the Community should take immediate, coherent and coordinated action in this respect. Regarding the non-energy raw materials, the Council supported the European Commission’s intention to launch an integrated strategy.

The Conclusions also include sector-specific measures aimed at improving competitiveness in the chemicals industry (exploiting the innovation potential, monitoring competitiveness and preparing a programme by the end of 2010), the electrical and electronics industry (measures aimed at promoting innovation, reporting on the implementation of the recommendations made by the Electra Teams by the end of 2012) and the automotive industry (Council considers avoiding possible additional burden created by legislative measures, European Commission is invited to report regularly to the Competitiveness Council on progress achieved in implementing the CARS 21 agenda).

4.3. Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (Small Business Act)

The Small Business Act (SBA), which is based on the European Charter for Small Enterprises of 2000, is the first comprehensive European initiative aimed at encouraging the sustainable promotion of growth and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It aims to improve the overall approach to entrepreneurship and to irreversibly anchor the Think Small First principle in European policymaking from regulation to public service. The European Commission presented the SBA in a communication published on 25 June 2008. When the Competitiveness Council on 1 December 2008 adopted the Conclusions on the Small Business Act (plus annex = action plan) Austria committed itself to implementing the SBA. The Competitiveness Council on 28 May confirmed the progress made in implementing the SBA. In this context Member States stressed the importance of measures towards improving access to funding and reducing the administrative burden for enterprises. In a report presented by the European Commission on 15
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December, it pointed to the satisfactory progress made in implementing the SBA at both European and national level.

5. Common Agricultural Policy

Work in the field of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was dominated on the one hand by the crisis in the milk market and the ongoing debate on the “future of the CAP beyond 2013” and by the topic of “climate change and agriculture” on the other. The latter topic was also considered during the Swedish EU Council Presidency at an informal meeting of ministers of agriculture held in Växjö on 13 and 15 September.

The problems in the milk market caused by the drastic decline in prices for milk and dairy products were discussed in many ministerial meetings. Under the Swedish Presidency, a package of measures involving 300 million euros was, for instance adopted for the milk and dairy sector. Furthermore, a high-level group, chaired by the European Commission, was set up to discuss medium- to long-term measures for this sector and will present a report by 30 June 2010.

The discussion on the future of the CAP, which was initiated during the French EU Council Presidency, was continued at informal meetings of agriculture ministers. The first such meeting convened in Brno from 31 May to 2 June and dealt with “direct payments”, while the second one, held during the Swedish Council Presidency, focused on “the future of rural development”. Austria hosted a conference for like-minded Member States that dealt with the future of the CAP and adopted the “Vienna Principles”. These Principles support a strong future CAP (based on the Two Pillar Model) particularly for the many needs and requirements the market cannot fulfil. The main objectives pursued by the CAP are assuring food security, preservation of natural resources involving comprehensive agricultural landscapes and development in the rural regions against the background of changing framework conditions, like climate change, population growth and decreasing resources.

A relevant topic in this context was European quality policy and the European Commission’s Green Paper. Furthermore, political agreement on a regulation on combating illegal logging was reached and steps towards simplification of the CAP were taken and welcomed by Austria.

6. Transport

The Transport Council on 11 and 12 June reached political agreement on a proposal for a regulation on the creation of a European rail network for competitive freight, which is to add further momentum to shifting freight transport to the environmentally friendly mode of rail transport by improv-
ing networks and ensuring a smooth flow of transport along important international corridors while at the same time maintaining high-quality passenger transport services.

A further strengthening of consumer rights was achieved by a political agreement on a proposal for a regulation on the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport, reached by the Transport Council on 17 December. The proposal includes provisions regulating the rights of persons of reduced mobility, operators’ duties in connection with delays or cancellations of trips, information duties and provisions on dealing with complaints and regulations concerning liability issues. The proposal will be referred to the European Parliament for further discussion.

In close coordination with the European Parliament, the Transport Council reached consensus on 17 December on a proposal for a directive on the deployment of intelligent transport systems (ITS) in road transport. The goal is to contribute to enhancing transport sustainability, efficiency and safety by creating compatible, interoperable ITS systems which are accessible throughout the EU and also to take account of interfaces with other modes of transport.

Contributing to the discussion on the sustainable future of transport, conducted against the background of the presentation of a new EU White Paper on Transport Policy, Austria underlined that the principle of modal shift to greener modes of transport represented a fundamental element of current and future transport policy. In this context, Austria stressed that in the spirit of effective protection of people and the environment under a sustainable transport policy, the promotion of low-emission modes of transport must constitute a priority in the face of climate change and with a view to the related discussions at the Copenhagen Climate Summit.

In connection with the mandate granted in 2008 to negotiate the establishment of a transport community with the South-Eastern European Partner Countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the Transport Ministers Council of 9 October adopted negotiating directives on road freight transport. Provided they fully implement the relevant requirements under the acquis communautaire in the fields of transport, safety and the environment, these negotiation directives foresee granting the partner countries a specific number of additional permits for road freight transport to and/or through the EU Member States. In view of the highly sensitive nature of the transport issue, Austria abstained from voting when this mandate was adopted.

With respect to aviation, the Transport Council on 17 December adopted a negotiation mandate for a cooperation agreement between the EU and the International Civil Aviation Organisation ICAO on a general framework for intensified cooperation in the fields of “safety”, “security”, “environment” and “air traffic management”. Furthermore, negotiation mandates on the
accession of Iceland and Norway to the EU-USA Air Transport Agreement, a bilateral agreement on civil aviation safety between the EC (note: EU after 1 December) and Brazil, a comprehensive air transport agreement between the EU and Georgia as well as a Euro-Mediterranean Air Transport Agreement with Tunisia and Algeria were adopted by the Transport Council on 9 October.

In line with the objective of improving performance and sustainability of the European air transport system, work on the Single European Sky II package was continued.

With respect to navigation, a political agreement was reached by the Transport Council on 9 October on the proposal for a regulation concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway, submitted by the European Commission in December 2008.

In the elections for the Council of the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), held on 27 November during the session of the IMO Assembly, the current members for Category A and Category B were confirmed; in Category C all EU Members States’ candidacies were successful.

At the 31st plenary session of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), held in Strasbourg on 7 and 8 July, a new work programme and budget were adopted. The 2010 – 2020 work programme focuses specifically on safety, security and the environment.

Portuguese Director General of Civil Aviation Luis Antonio Fonseca de Almeida was re-elected as ECAC President.

7. Environment

While the EU’s climate and energy package was the dominant topic on the environment agenda in 2008, the discussion on measures against climate change became an increasingly important topic on the international agenda in 2009. In December, the whole world looked in anticipation to Copenhagen where the state parties had met to discuss the hoped-for internationally binding agreement for the time after the expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. The generally rather disappointing outcome – the “taking note” of the non-binding Copenhagen Accord – was largely considered insufficient at international level.

The EU was well-prepared for the international climate process, which had begun long before Copenhagen. The EU position had been frequently defined and refined in conclusions adopted by the Council and the European Council in order to demonstrate the Union’s level of flexibility, but also its target-orientation and thematic leadership. Furthermore, the Union had committed itself to increasing the self-imposed reduction target from 20 per cent to 30 per cent by 2020, provided that other industrialised countries followed suit by committing themselves to similar targets and advanced developing coun-
tries contributed appropriately to emission reduction. However, other key players remained far from responsive to this ambitious goal.

In a first reaction at their Council meeting on 22 December, the EU environment ministers defined the Copenhagen Accord as a first step and a basis for international CO2 reduction commitments. They confirmed their conditional offer to reduce emissions by 30 per cent and to provide the annual 2.4 billion euro in fast-start funding from 2010 to 2012 and committed themselves to continue working expeditiously in this field.

**LIFE+** is the EU’s financing instrument for the environment, which is endowed with a total budget of 2.14 billion euro for the period 2007–2013. Based on a tender organised in 2008, a total amount of 206 million euros was made available across the entire EU for 195 projects, including three from Austria.

In the field of **EU accession negotiations**, the environment chapter was opened with Turkey in December. This was, however, not possible in the case of Croatia due to Slovenia’s earlier blockade of negotiations.

The European Strategy for Sustainable Development, which had been renewed in 2006, was reviewed for a second time by the European Council based on both the European Commission’s progress report and the contribution prepared together by the Friends of the Presidency Group and, for the first time, the General Affairs Council. A need for action was identified, particularly in the fields of climate, energy consumption in transport and preservation of biodiversity. The review also confirmed the Strategy’s long-term perspective stressing that it will continue to form the overarching political framework for all Union policies and strategies. As the stimulus packages adopted by the Member States to counter the economic crisis only contribute to a certain extent to ensuring sustainable development, future growth will have to focus particularly on balanced and coherent approaches and on creating synergies between economic, social and environmental policies. The review also stated that the sustainability discussion was contributing essentially to the further development of governance strategies in a wide range of policy areas and processes.

8. **Consumer Protection**

In August 2008, the European Commission presented a proposal for a directive on consumer rights, which constitutes the most comprehensive regulation initiative launched so far in the field of consumer contract law. It aims to replace four existing consumer protection directives (doorstep selling, distance selling, sale of consumer goods and guarantees, unfair contract terms).

The central element of the proposal is a change of system, from the principle of minimum harmonisation applied so far to the principle of full harmonisation. Austria – like many other EU Member States – however fears
that this will entail a reduction in national consumer protection levels as well as interfere with national contract law systems. Austria’s position in the negotiations is guided by the clear task defined in the Austrian government agreement, which sets out that in the event of a new European regulation of consumer contracts, action is to be taken to ensure that high Austrian standards will not be negatively affected as a result of full harmonisation.

A first political debate on the proposed directive was held by the Competitiveness Council on 3 December. Austria argued in favour of striving for differentiated full harmonisation (i.e. restricting full harmonisation to appropriate areas, minimum harmonisation for all other areas and/or allowing sufficient room for national regulations). Such an approach would enable national consumer protection standards to be maintained while taking account of distinctive national aspects. Austria stressed that it was particularly important for the directive not to interfere with national general contract law, since this would otherwise disrupt national regulation systems. Agreement on the proposal was not yet foreseeable by the end of the year and the new European Commission’s position remains to be seen.

A very useful tool for monitoring consumer-relevant events in the Single Market is the EU Consumer Markets Scoreboard, which investigates how markets in various sectors of the economy are performing from a consumer perspective. Under a comprehensive screening of retail markets against five consumer relevant key indicators (prices, complaints, switching rates, satisfaction and safety) for patterns which could indicate market malfunctioning are determined and subsequently corrected if possible. The Consumer Markets Scoreboard is prepared annually.

9. Energy

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

On 1 January, the gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine resulted in a stoppage of the gas supply, which was lifted only following mediation by the EU. Subsequent to these events the willingness to prevent similar risks increased among all parties involved.

Following the gas crisis, the European Council endorsed the Second Strategic Energy Review (SER2) in its meeting on 19 and 20 March and agreed on further development of energy infrastructure and interconnections, improving crisis mechanisms, stepping up its commitment with respect to energy efficiency and a further diversification of energy sources and routes. Under the EU stimulus plan, the European Council agreed on earmarking funding of 3.98 billion euros for energy-related projects.
On 12 June, the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council (TTE Council) agreed on minimum stocks of oil or petroleum products aimed at further improving the EU crisis mechanisms. On 3 September, the Third Internal Energy Market Package came into effect. It supplements all current regulations and strengthens supply security, competition and sustainable energy supply.

In a communication published on 7 October, the European Commission specified funding for the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) set up to promote cost efficient and low-carbon emission technologies. Moreover, EU-wide discussion on the Plan’s programming and funding was initiated.

On 7 December, the TTE Council decided that the seat of the Agency for the Cooperation of Energy Regulators (ACER) will be located in Slovenia. This new EU agency will monitor developments in the energy market from 2011.

In all these processes, Austria pursued its energy-policy interests, focusing particularly on the promotion of renewable sources of energy, shaping the internal energy market and the diversification of energy sources and routes. An area given particular attention in this context was the realisation of the Nabucco pipeline project. Austria also supported the establishment of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), which will set up a liaison office in Vienna with a view to cooperating with the Vienna-based international organisations active in the energy sector.

10. Education and Youth

In core messages to the European Council, the Council on 16 February as well as on 26 and 27 November underlined that open, efficient and high-quality education was of essential importance particularly in difficult economic times. In this spirit it called for increasing investment in human capital as a contribution to economic recovery. The key focus of the Council meeting on 11 and 12 May was on the Conclusions on the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in the field of general and vocational training until 2020. On 26 and 27 November, the Council’s discussions focused on the best ways and means to promote the potential of pupils with a migrant background and increase their educational success.

Capacity for innovation, creative thinking and creative solutions as well as the question of how to integrate new elements into the system were key issues dealt with at numerous events held during the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

The EU Programme for Lifelong Learning provided some 9,000 young people and adults with the opportunity to spend some time studying or working in another EU country. The start of “Comenius Individual Mobility”, in which Austria participates together with twelve other EU Member States, marked
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an important milestone in this context. This new scheme launched under the EU programme for the first time promotes individual pupil mobility.

With respect to higher education, conclusions on the role of education in a fully-functioning knowledge triangle were adopted.

With a view to tackling the current challenges posed by the economic crisis, the Council on 16 February also adopted a number of core messages on the European Youth Pact. It stressed that the transition from education and training to working life is to be facilitated for young people and unemployment is to be countered more effectively. In the Council meeting of 27 November a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field for 2010–2018 was agreed.

Along projects in the area of youth participation and democracy, the EU’s YOUTH IN ACTION Programme (2007–2013) has also facilitated exchanges of youth groups, of European volunteers as well as youth trainers and multipliers: 2,600 of the 130,000 participants EU-wide came from Austria.

11. Research

Considerable progress was made on the Implementation of the European Research Area (ERA). At the Council meeting of 3 and 4 December, Conclusions were agreed on promoting the implementation of the ERA Vision 2020, discussions were held on the realisation of the knowledge triangle (research – education – innovation) and on putting the “fifth freedom” (free circulation of knowledge and researchers in Europe) into practice. With a view to simplifying the establishment of European research infrastructure, ERIC (European Research Infrastructure Consortium) was set up as a new common framework. Under the Joint Programming Initiative, the first few topics for such initiatives were defined in December: agriculture, food security and climate change; health, diet and diet-related diseases, cultural heritage, climate change and security. Cooperation between the EU and the Russian Federation in the field of research was another topic on the Council’s agenda. Discussions also focused on further progress on the ITER project (international collaborative research project to use fusion for energy production) and the expected increase in funding requirements.

Under the coordination of national research programmes, the EMRP Initiative (European Meteorology Research Programme) was adopted in July. In October, the European Commission presented a Communication on BONUS 169, an initiative for a joint Baltic Sea Research programme.

With a view to further improving the results generated under the 7th Research Framework Programme, the European Research Council (one of the four specific programmes under the framework programme) was evaluated and the mid-term evaluation of the 7th Framework Programme itself initiated by the European Commission. In this context, the European Com-
mission has announced that it is presenting a Communication on simplification of procedures under the 7th Framework Programme in 2010 for which initial preliminary work has already been undertaken.

In December, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) selected its first three operational units, also known as Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs): Climate KIC, KIC InnoEnergy and EIT ICT Labs.

12. European Satellite Navigation Programmes GALILEO and EGNOS

GALILEO is a European, globally deployable satellite navigation system designed for civilian needs and is also the largest Community infrastructure initiative. It is composed of a constellation of 30 satellites orbiting the earth at an altitude of 24,000 kilometres, which will be connected with several ground stations. After having gone operational – scheduled for 2015 – the system will emit signals enabling positioning of unprecedented precision.

The original design for the establishment and operation under a public-private partnership (PPP) concept failed in 2007. In 2008, it was decided to build up the full system by 2013 based exclusively on public funding. To this end, a total of 3.4 billion euros were earmarked in the Financial Perspective 2007–2013. So far, two test satellites have been launched to reserve the necessary frequency bands. EGNOS (European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service), a system designed to improve positioning precision of existing navigation systems is now in operation and also forms part of the future European Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS).

Owing to the restructuring of the GALILEO Programme 2007/2008, the central programme management responsibilities now lie with the European Commission (instead of the GSA–GNSS Supervisory Authority or “GALILEO Supervisory Authority”, which has temporarily been based in Brussels since 2004). Critical safety- and security-relevant infrastructure is being monitored by the GALILEO Security Monitoring Centre (GSMC). The United Kingdom and France were selected to co-host the GSMC. Work is currently underway on amending the regulation on the European GNSS programmes’ administrative bodies.

Eleven countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) including three new EU Member States, have submitted their candidacies to host the headquarters of the GALILEO supervisory authority (in future GALILEO agency, EGA). The formal decision on which Member State will be awarded the seat of the GALILEO agency will not be taken before the Transport Ministers Council scheduled for June 2010.
13. Establishment of an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice

The December European Council adopted the Stockholm Programme, which primarily aims to promote the further development of an area of freedom, security and justice. The Stockholm Programme was set up as the EU's work programme that outlines the challenges the Union will face in the field of justice and home affairs over the next five years and also offers solutions to manage these challenges. The Stockholm Programme is based on the principle of putting citizens’ interests, needs and requirements first. The focus is on ensuring respect for fundamental rights and freedoms and integrity while guaranteeing security in Europe. Guided by the motto of building a “Citizens’ Europe” actions will be taken to inter alia strengthen safety and security as well as protecting European citizens’ fundamental rights.

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

The expansion of the Schengen area constitutes an essential milestone on the road towards a common Europe and the further development of the European peace project. With Switzerland’s accession to the Schengen area, elimination of border controls on persons at country borders was implemented as of 12 December 2008, followed by the elimination of border controls at airports on 29 March 2009. The Austrian authorities have undertaken efforts to ensure that the opportunities of the Schengen expansion are fully exploited, while minimising risks. 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.

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. Attacks with a terrorist background committed all over the world confirm that the only means to effectively counter terrorism is through close international cooperation.

In 2004, an EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator was established to ensure close cooperation among EU Member States in implementing the EU Action Plan on Combating Terrorism. This EU Action Plan sets out concrete actions for preventing, combating, investigating and prosecuting terrorism. In 2009, attention increasingly focused on collaboration among EU Member States.
in combating radicalisation and recruitment for terrorist activities and dealing with cyber crime. Furthermore, an EU Action Plan involving measures aimed at strengthening chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security was adopted.

As regards the operational fight against terrorism, the European Police Office **EUROPOL**, which is based in The Hague, supports and coordinates the individual Member States’ efforts. EUROPOL facilitates the exchange of information between EU Member States and analyses information gathered from the EU area and other international cooperation partners to gain concrete insights into potential threat scenarios. EUROPOL holds neither powers of execution nor powers of investigation.

**EUROJUST** supports the EU Member States in the investigation and prosecution of serious cross-border and organised crime and promotes EU-wide cooperation among national judicial authorities on criminal cases.

Terrorism is a global challenge and therefore requires cooperation between the EU, its partner countries and international organisations. In 2009, the EU and the USA signalled their readiness for intensified transatlantic cooperation. In 2009, the EU selected the South-Asian and Sahel regions as well as Yemen as priorities for intensified EU support to third countries in combating terrorism. In this context, the EU also continued its support for the Western Balkan region.

Through its military and civilian crisis management operations under the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), the EU contributes to improving the security environment, which influences the conditions for radicalisation and the readiness to use violence in third countries. The EU consistently supports multilateral approaches in countering terrorism and supports the central role played by the United Nations (UN) in the context of anti-terrorism activities, which is also reflected in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2006 (see Chapter C). In its relations with third countries, the EU consistently supports the ratification and implementation of the relevant UN legal instruments to counter terrorism, fully respecting the obligations under international law in the field of human rights, refugee and international humanitarian law. The EU also continued its efforts towards an expedient conclusion of a comprehensive UN Convention on International Terrorism.

Combating terrorism is one of the priorities defined with respect to establishing a European area of freedom, security and justice. The Stockholm Programme (see A.V.13) also focuses on striking the necessary balance between European citizens’ security on the one hand and their right to the protection of privacy and individual rights on the other.
15. Health

The EU’s work in the field of public health was mainly dominated by the emergence of a new flu virus in Mexico, which subsequently also spilled over to Europe. Reacting to the increase of the WHO Pandemic Alert Level to Phase 6, the Council dealt in two special sessions on 30 April and 12 October with the influenza strain A (H1N1). In this context, a review was conducted to verify if the measures taken under the national pandemic plans at EU level and the necessary coordination and cooperation mechanism had proven successful and what improvements were necessary. Deliberations also focused on issues relating to communication and coordination, the potential common acquisition of vaccines, providing assistance to developing countries and a multi-sectoral approach.

Work was completed on a Council Recommendation on patient safety including the prevention and control of healthcare-associated infections, a Council recommendation for European action in the field of rare diseases, Conclusions on innovative incentives for effective antibiotics, Conclusions on safe and efficient healthcare through e-Health as well as on alcohol and health.

The main topics in the field of consumer health were consumer protection as well as animal welfare and protection. The Cosmetics Directive was thus amended, a new Directive on Toy Safety prepared, and the European Commission’s report on the three regulations forming the core of the “Food Hygiene Package” presented and discussed. In the course of these deliberations, it became increasingly clear that experience with the application of the hygiene regulations was in general positive. With respect to genetic engineering, permits were granted for putting genetically modified organisms into circulation – in spite of resistance put up by Austria and numerous other EU Member States; a proposal by the European Commission on lifting the ban on the cultivation of two genetically modified types of maize in Austria, was, however, rejected by the Council with a large majority of votes.

VIII. The European Union’s External Relations

1. The Common Foreign and Security Policy

1.1. General

Under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) current foreign policy issues relevant to all EU Member States were addressed at EU level. The EU expressed its position on issues of major significance in declarations and conclusions adopted by the General Affairs and External Relations Council as well as the European Council.

The main topics dealt with under the CFSP in 2009 were the quest for a peaceful solution to the Middle East conflict, efforts aimed at settling the conflict involving the Iranian nuclear programme, the situation in Afghani-
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stan, managing the critical development on the Horn of Africa and the continuation of the stabilisation process in the Western Balkans.

With its civilian and military operations the EU was again present worldwide – from the Western Balkans to the Middle East and Africa.

In March, the EU military operation in Chad and the northwest of the Central African Republic (EUFOR TCHAD/RCA) was terminated and its tasks handed over to troops under UN command forming part of MINURCAT.

The Council adjusted existing sanctions imposed against Belarus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Iran, Iraq, Liberia, Moldova, Myanmar, Uzbekistan, Zimbabwe and successor states of former Yugoslavia to promote their cooperation with the International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Furthermore, the list of persons and groups of persons subject to specific restrictive measures to combat terrorism was revised.

The EU’s Special Representatives (EUSR) remain an important instrument of CFSP. The existing mandates include Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Sudan, the African Union (AU), the Middle East Peace Process, the African Great Lakes Region (Burundi, Kenya, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda), South Caucasus and Central Asia. As of the end of 2007 the EU has also had a Special Envoy to Burma/Myanmar.

In March, the Austrian Valentin Inzko was appointed EU Special Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2009, the CFSP budget amounted to 242.72 million euros. Most of these funds were spent on civil crisis management operations, EUSR activities, promotion of disarmament activities and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

1.2. The Common European Security and Defence Policy

Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December, the term “Common European Security and Defence Policy” (CSDP) has replaced the term “European Security and Defence Policy” (ESDP). CSDP remains an integral element of the EU’s CFSP. In this context, the Treaty of Lisbon also provides for a deepening of the CSDP by introducing an assistance clause among EU Member States, an extension of the so-called Petersberg tasks, the improvement of cooperation within the European Defence Agency, the opportunity for setting up permanent structured cooperation in the military field, and the strengthening of the role of the High Representative for the CFSP.

1.2.1. Ongoing Crisis Management Operations

The EU continued its EUFOR Althea military operation to provide stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina comprising an average of approximately 2,000
personnel, 150 of which were from Austria. Planning efforts regarding the transformation of the operation into a successor mission to advise and assist the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina were largely completed. The transformation can thus be effected as soon as such a step seems justified by the further political developments in the country.

In December 2008, the Austrian Major General Bernhard Bair assumed command of EUFOR. Along with its contribution to EUFOR, Austria in 2009 again contributed an army company serving in a battalion to support the two battalions of the so-called operational reserve forces, which are available in their countries of origin to quickly reinforce the EUFOR-Althea troops and/or 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 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 Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo) supports the Kosovo authorities in further developing police, judiciary and customs structures and assumed the functions previously performed in these fields 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 of Kosovo. EULEX KOSOVO began its operations on 9 December 2008 only after an agreement had been concluded with the UN on an extended cooperation and/or distribution of tasks, which had originally not been provided for in this form. 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 30 experts from the spheres of policing and justice.

Following the break-out of the conflict between Georgia and Russia over the Georgian province of South Ossetia in August 2008 the dispatch of an EU Monitoring Mission to Georgia (EUMM Georgia) was decided. In addition to monitoring the withdrawal of troops, the mission’s mandate 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. The mission comprises about 230 observers, including three police officers and one human rights expert from Austria. In November, Austria decided to dispatch a small contingent of the Austrian Armed Forces to EUMM Georgia.

The main tasks of EU NAVFOR Somalia (Operation “Atalanta”) involve escorting vessels of the UN World Food Programme (WFP) headed for Somalia and other particularly endangered freight vessels and conducting patrols in pirate-infested waters. In the face of the increasing threat posed by
piracy to commercial navigation in the seas off the Horn of Africa, the UNSC adopted a number of resolutions creating the legal basis authorising international naval forces to act against pirates in Somali waters. Since October 2008, the EU has thus contributed successfully to deterring and containing piracy off the Horn of Africa.

Based on the relevant agreement with the EU, the majority of the persons suspected of piracy captured under Operation Atalanta were to be delivered to the third country Kenya for further criminal prosecution. As the security situation in Somalia remained unstable, preparatory works were launched for a **CSDP Mission to train soldiers belonging to the Somali security forces**. After having undergone training, these soldiers will support the country's weak Transitional Federal Government in reforming the security sector. This CSDP Mission, whose full title is EU Military Mission to Contribute to Training Somali Security Forces (**EUTM Somalia**), will be carried out in close coordination with other international players like the Somali government and AMISOM.

In March, the EU-led military operation **EUFOR Tchad/Central African Republic** was replaced according to plan by a new military component of the existing United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (**MINURCAT**). From the start, 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. The operation was primarily aimed at protecting the refugees from Darfur and the internally displaced persons in eastern Chad and the northwest of the Central African Republic, as well as the humanitarian aid personnel and the personnel of MINURCAT. 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.

The **EUSEC DR Congo** Mission was established in 2005 and has since supported the reform of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the 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. Since the summer of 2007, up to two Austrian officers have been participating in this mission. Since 2007, the EU has been active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo not only with EUSEC DR Congo but also with its police mission **EUPOL DR Congo**. The latter’s mandate involves advising and assisting the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo in its reform of the national police forces and in improving cooperation between the police and judicial authorities.

Since 2008, the EU has been supporting security sector reform (**SSR**) in Guinea-Bissau, particularly the restructuring 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 secu-
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The European Union’s External Relations authorities are faced with considerable difficulties in addressing these challenges.

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. An Austrian customs expert participated in EU BAM Rafah before the closure of the border crossing point. In the event that the border crossing point is reopened, Austria will be able to swiftly resume its participation by seconding up to four customs officers and up to two police officers.

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 mid-2009 to focus primarily on the further development of the interface between police and judicial authorities, was prepared by an Austrian judge and was headed by an expert from the Federal Ministry of Justice until the end of the year. In addition, Austria supported the mission by seconding another legal expert and two police officers.

Since July 2005, the EU has been operating the Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EJUJUST 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. So far, about 2,000 senior officials of the Iraqi police, judicial and penal authorities had undergone successful training. Austria supported the mission from the outset by seconding instructors from the fields of policing and justice.

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.

Set up in 2005, the European Union Border Assistance Mission EU BAM Moldova-Ukraine has been training and advising border and customs officers from both countries.

1.2.2. Development of Civilian and Military Crisis Management Capabilities

Following the successful completion of activities undertaken to accomplish the Civilian Headline Goal 2008 aimed at further developing the EU’s civil-
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ian crisis management capabilities in December 2007, the EU in 2009 continued its efforts towards implementing 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 to this pool.

Activities aimed at implementing the Military Headline Goal 2010 were also continued. In this context, the focus was still being placed on taking concrete steps to close remaining capability gaps identified in the “Progress Catalogue” prepared in 2007. The guideline applied to this end is the “Capability Development Plan”, which lists identified deficiencies and specific corrective actions, ranking them according to level of urgency for corrective action. Experts from the EU Member States as well as the European Defence Agency, whose role was strengthened by the Treaty of Lisbon, make important contributions to the relevant work undertaken in this area.

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 each and can be deployed within five to 15 days, if so required. In the first half of 2011, Austria will, for the first time, contribute to the formation of a battle group by providing about 180 personnel. The Netherlands will be in command of the group, which will also comprise troops from Germany, Finland and Lithuania.

Austria also plans to participate in another battle group in the second half of 2012. The group, which will be under German command, will comprise troops from the Czech Republic, Ireland and the third countries Croatia and Macedonia.

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, Member States have committed themselves to progressively improve defence capabilities as well as to make civilian and military capabilities available for implementation of the CSDP.

### 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
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the EU and other organisations, especially the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the OSCE and the African Union (AU).

A proof of successful cooperation between the EU and the UN was also given in Chad, where EUFOR Chad/Central African Republic collaborated closely with MINURCAT and was eventually replaced by UN troops in spring.

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. Furthermore, 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 the 2007 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 and continued throughout 2009.

2. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The concept of European Neighbourhood policy (ENP) applies to Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. A special system of cooperation was agreed on with Russia. Under this scheme, the EU and its “key partner” Russia develop their “strategic partnership” not within the ENP but by establishing “four Common Spaces”.

Cooperation under the ENP is based on the existing bilateral association, partnership and cooperation agreements. Belarus, Libya and Syria are included in the ENP, but due to a lack of association, partnership and cooperation agreements they do not fully participate in it.

The aim of the ENP is to enable the neighbouring states involved to benefit from the common area of peace, security and prosperity by defining concrete targets set out in individual multiannual Action Plans tailored to each partner country and differing from country to country. Under the ENP, these countries will not only fully tap in to the potential of their respective association or partnership and cooperation agreement but, depending on their commitment, will also be able to benefit from an increasingly closer relationship that goes beyond cooperation and also includes a considerable level of economic and political integration. Depending on the progress made in implementing their Action Plan, adjustment in the form of new agreements
may become necessary. In addition to the ongoing review in Committee and Association or Cooperation Council meetings, annual Progress Plans are prepared by the European Commission.

The thematic priorities laid down in the Action Plans include areas such as political dialogue and reform; trade, market and regulatory reform; cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs; transport, energy, information society and the environment, as well as contact between civil societies. In June, the establishment of the Black Sea Synergy was adopted aimed at enhancing cooperation with this economically, energy policy and politically sensitive area. In this context, Austria attaches special importance to the links between the Danube and the Black Sea regions.

For the period 2007–2013, measures launched under the ENP and the Strategic Partnership are funded based on a more flexible and at the same time standardised European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which replaces earlier support programmes like Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) and the MEDA Programme (financial and technical measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership).

The year 2009 was of particular importance for relations between the EU and the countries belonging to the Eastern Partnership. On 7 May, the Heads of State and Government of the EU Member States and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine convened for a summit to officially launch the Eastern Partnership. This initiative puts the Union’s relations with its neighbours in the East on a new footing. By creating multilateral platforms relating to the areas of democracy, stability, economic integration, energy security and people-to-people contacts, new instruments were devised that will promote interrelations between the EU and these countries and among the Eastern Partnership countries.

This new Partnership also provides for a new generation of Association Agreements, aimed at enhanced mutual openness, a gradual integration into the EU’s economic area and an approximation to European norms and standards.

Negotiations with Ukraine had already been opened in 2008 and were successfully continued. The European Commission was given a mandate to open negotiations with Moldova in July. The Action Plans with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia were further implemented while at the same time making the necessary preparations to open negotiations on new agreements with these states.

The implementation of the Action Plans with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia was continued. The Association Council with Egypt decided to set up an ad-hoc group to explore a potential upgrading of EU-Egyptian relations. With regard to Morocco, the implementation of the road map agreed in 2008 towards reaching the “advanced status” sought by
Morocco was started and the preparation of a successor instrument to the Action Plan initiated.

The EU completed preparatory work in connection with the signing of the Association Agreement with Syria, which had been initialled at the end of 2008, and continued negotiations with Libya for a framework agreement on cooperation in various areas.

The European Commission decided that funds from the governance facility set up under the European Neighbourhood Policy be made available to Morocco and the Palestinian Authority.

The ENP partner countries have also come to benefit from new types of technical assistance. Employing EU funding instruments which had already been used successfully in the new accession countries and the potential accession candidate countries, reform processes and institution building is supported in the partner countries by setting up EU twinning programmes (administrative partnership) and dispatching experts to provide swift and short-term assistance under TAIEX.

Austria applied for projects in the fields of transport (Morocco, Georgia), in the social (Azerbaijan) and competitive (Moldova) sector and was awarded an environmental project in Ukraine.

3. South Eastern Europe/Western Balkans

3.1. Albania

Albania’s accession to NATO on 1 April at the summit celebrating the organisation’s 60th anniversary is generally considered as one of the country’s most important foreign political achievements since it opened to the outside world at the beginning of the 1990s. 1 April also marked the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) concluded between the European Union and Albania.

On 16 November, the Council referred the application for EU membership submitted by Albania on 28 April, to the European Commission for preparation of the so-called avis with a view to opening accession negotiations. On 16 December, the questionnaire containing 2,280 questions was handed over to Prime Minister Sali Berisha in Tirana. The deadline defined for answering this catalogue of questions was set for the end of March 2010. The questionnaire attaches particular importance to issues relating to the political spectrum of the Copenhagen Criteria including the fight against corruption and reform of the judicial system. Based on the replies given to the questions, the European Commission is expected to issue an opinion on whether to open accession negotiations with Albania towards the end of 2010.

The Albanian government expressed its confidence that by the end of 2010 it will have fulfilled the conditions for achieving visa liberalisation as set
out in the roadmap, i.e. visa free travel to countries in the Schengen area for Albanian citizens.

The country’s achievements at foreign policy level are, however, overshadowed by the opposition’s boycott of parliament. The opposition with links to the Socialist Party does not recognise the outcome of the parliamentary elections of 28 June. It inter alia demands that one third of the votes be recounted. The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) had attested to progress made in conducting these elections, but at the same time referred to several shortcomings to be rectified by Albania.

3.2. Bosnia and Herzegovina

In 2009, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) made only minor progress towards visa liberalisation as well as accession to the EU and NATO. However, with a view to creating the necessary requirements for visa liberalisation, BiH’s Council of Ministers and parliament adopted some key legal regulations. The target thus set for visa liberalisation is mid-2010.

The priorities defined by Austrian foreign policy with respect to BiH were rewarded and reinforced by the appointment of Ambassador Valentin Inzko as High Representative (HR) and EU Special Representative (EUSR) in BiH on 26 March and the assumption of the EUFOR command by Austrian Major General Bernhard Bair on 4 December 2008.

On 19 May, US Vice President Joseph Biden and EU High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana paid a joint visit to BiH, thus pushing the country higher up on the international community’s agenda. In autumn, the Swedish EU Council Presidency joined forces with the USA under the so-called Butmir Process to encourage another attempt at constitutional reform, which is a prerequisite for the country’s successful EU accession candidacy. However, hardly any progress was made under this process due to lack of willingness to compromise on the part of BiH’s politicians.

The electoral campaign for the parliamentary elections in October 2010 has already impacted events in 2009. The application of the Bonn Powers by HR Valentin Inzko has been the focus of strong criticism by the Republika Srpska (RS), which continued its obstruction of the decisions by the HR which had been endorsed by the international community. At an extraordinary session held on 24 and 25 December, the Republika Srpska’s parliament deliberated on the possibility of holding a referendum on the HR’s decisions and BiH’s accession to NATO and the EU. The RS as well as the Bosniak-Croatian side, which calls for independent entity status, have used increasingly strong rhetoric, and fronts have hardened among the country’s political leaders.

At foreign policy level, BiH’s election to the UN Security Council for the period from 2010/2011 was an important success, which has, at least partially, compensated for the fact that the country had neither been included in the NATO-MAP nor granted visa-free travel to the EU.
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The International Monetary Fund (IMF) granted BiH a loan of 1.2 billion euros, the first portion of which was already transferred in the summer. In November, however, an IMF delegation determined that the conditions, including for instance far-reaching budget and income cuts, had not been sufficiently fulfilled by BiH – which meant that the second portion under the IMF Stand-by Arrangement was not released for payment.

3.3. Kosovo

The declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 and the subsequent entry into force of the country’s new constitution on 15 June 2008 marked the opening of a new chapter for the Republic of Kosovo. For the first time, a democratically elected government, parliament and president assumed responsibility for the further development of Kosovo. The youngest state on the territory of former Yugoslavia covers an area of about 10,000 km² and has 2.15 million inhabitants.

The challenges to be tackled this year were two-fold and consisted of promoting the newly established state’s international recognition as well as its economic and social development.

Faced with the youngest population in Europe and an unemployment rate of 35 per cent, the government undertook targeted efforts in the field of education in order to create opportunities for young people. Austria supports its Kosovar partner institutions particularly in the field of higher education. By incorporating the Ahtisaari Plan in the constitution, the Kosovar government also assumed responsibility for providing a safe and secure environment for the minority populations living in Kosovo. The efforts towards decentralisation also aim to put key competences into the hands of local decision-makers. At the same time, by redrawing the borders of individual communities, minorities – and particularly the Serb minority – were given the opportunity to assume more individual responsibility. This process was successfully completed for 36 of the 38 communities and the local as well as mayoral direct elections on 15 November (run-off votes for mayoral elections on 13 December) were thus held in the new municipalities. Both the independent preparation as well as the conduct of these first elections since Kosovo’s independence were described as fair, free and democratic by both local and international observers and thus regarded as successfully attesting to the country’s democratic and political maturity. With respect to the privatisation process, however, high expectations had been set which could not be fulfilled.

By the end of 2009, 64 states, including 22 EU Member States, had recognised the sovereignty of the Republic of Kosovo.

At foreign policy level, Kosovo achieved two further goals. The country’s efforts towards recognition by and access to international organisations were successful with respect to both the IMF, of which it became the 186th member in May, and the World Bank, which it joined in June.
As Serbia does not recognise Kosovo’s independence but rather continues to consider it as forming an integral part of the Serb territory, an attitude which is supported by the Russian Federation, access to the UN and other international organisations continues to be blocked. With the adoption of an UNGA resolution on 8 October 2008, Serbia succeeded in its request to have the question of the legality of Kosovo’s declaration of independence examined by the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The ICJ’s expert opinion on the issue, in the preparation of which Austria participated in favour of Kosovo, was scheduled for mid-2010.

The civilian administration UNMIK, established by resolution 1244 (1999) reduced its presence by handing over responsibilities to the Kosovar institutions but continues to play a role in representing Kosovo in several international fora. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, which has been headed by Austrian Ambassador Werner Almhofer since 1 October 2008 and comprises about 800 staff, continues to fulfil its task in the field of institution-building and providing support to local administration. The military presence KFOR, which was also set up by resolution 1244 (1999) and to which Austria – as the largest non-NATO provider of troops – currently contributes 460 soldiers, will draw down its troops to 10,000 by the end of January 2010. This step will then mark the launching of a smooth transition process during which KFOR will hand over its tasks to the Kosovo Security Force (KSF) and the Kosovo Police Force (KPF).

Set up in February 2008, the International Civilian Office (ICO) plays a particularly important role. It is equipped with far-reaching executive powers and charged with monitoring the implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan. As International Civilian Representative (ICR), the Dutch diplomat Pieter Feith is mandated with cooperating closely with the Kosovo Government while at the same time representing European interests in his capacity as EU Special Representative (EUSR). In the course of his duties he is required to cooperate closely with the largest CSDP mission, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) which supports the country’s authorities in building up functioning legal, police, customs as well as judiciary systems and currently comprise about 2,500 staff. EULEX plays a particularly relevant law enforcement role in those areas north of the Ibar River, inhabited by Serbs, which do not recognise the Kosovo central government and have created their own “parallel structures”.

The challenges to be managed in the future lie in gradually aligning all parts of the country to the Kosovo central institutions, intensifying economic and social development by implementing the privatisation process and further developing good neighbourly relations.

3.4. Croatia

Following the resignation of Ivo Sanader on 1 July, Jadranka Kosor was elected new Prime Minister by the Croatian parliament on 6 July and has
since headed the coalition government led by the HDZ (Croatian Democratic Union). With regard to the unresolved border issues between Croatia and Slovenia involving the Bay of Piran and several sections of the land border, an Arbitration Agreement was signed by the two countries in Stockholm on 4 November and ratified by Croatia before the end of 2009. After the agreement had been signed, Slovenia lifted its blockade of several chapters forming part of Croatia’s EU accession negotiations.

On 1 April, Croatia officially joined NATO. At the end of 2009, Croatia’s term as non-permanent member of the UNSC expired. The mandate of the OSCE Office in Zagreb, charged 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, was extended until the end of 2010.

### 3.5. Macedonia

Euro-Atlantic integration remains Macedonia’s declared foreign policy goal. However, the still unresolved name issue continued to hamper progress in achieving this objective.

In March, municipal elections and the first ballot for the presidential elections were held. The second round of presidential elections, held in May, was won by Gjorge Ivanov (VMRO-DPMNE). According to the report by the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the elections largely fulfilled democratic standards. Criminal action was taken to deal with cases of attempted undue influence and voter intimidation as well as attempted manipulation using outdated voter lists.

On 14 October, the European Commission presented its progress report which contained the long hoped-for recommendation to start accession negotiations. But as no progress had been made in the name issue with Greece, the Council decided on 7 December to postpone the decision on a date for the opening of accession negotiations until the first half year of 2010.

Visa liberalisation took effect on 19 December, with some 60 per cent of passport holders (i.e. those with biometric passports) benefitting from it by the end of the year.

On 17 October, work in connection with the demarcation of the border with Kosovo was completed, making Macedonia the first state in the region to have a fully demarked border.

Concerning the name dispute with Greece, however, neither talks held by UN mediator Matthew Nimetz with the Greek and the Macedonian chief negotiators nor bilateral high-level meetings succeeded in producing any progress.
3.6. **Montenegro**

Montenegro has made substantial progress towards achieving its goals of EU and NATO membership. The largely positive progress report presented in mid-October following the country’s application for EU membership in 2008, the avis expected for 2010 and the granting of visa liberalisation on 19 December contributed to supporting the broad consensus on EU membership among the country’s politicians and the general public, enabling the government to meet people’s expectations on these issues. The country’s coalition government was re-elected at the end of March and is led by Prime Minister Milo Djukanović. Although actively pursued by government, the goal of NATO membership is still not uncontroversial among Montenegrins. Indeed, a further step towards NATO membership was taken in December, when the country was granted NATO Membership Action Plan status.

Along with Euro-Atlantic integration, the country’s constructive neighbourhood policy recognised as a stability factor in the region remains a cornerstone of Montenegrin foreign policy. Relations with Serbia, which had temporarily been tense following Kosovo’s recognition by Montenegro in 2008, were stabilised and in autumn ambassadors were exchanged. The friendly relations with Croatia, BiH and Albania were further intensified. Rumours about tensions with Kosovo over border issues proved incorrect and towards the end of the year the two countries agreed to establish diplomatic relations.

Its successful term as chair of the CEFTA (Central European Free Trade Agreement) and the organisation of numerous international conferences contributed to ensuring that Montenegro, although young and small, again gained international visibility in 2009.

Following the electoral success of the governing coalition “European Montenegro” led by Prime Minister Djukanović, which was confirmed in office by an absolute majority, the domestic situation remained largely stable. By the end of the year, however, tensions emerged within the coalition and the largest coalition party DPS. These were on the one hand attributable to the impact of the economic crisis, which was increasingly being felt in the second half of the year and led to a decline in GDP of about 5 per cent, as well as problems in the financial services sector triggered by the artificial rise in real estate prices – and, on the other hand, related to the announcement by Prime Minister Djukanović who signalled that he intends to resign shortly. By the end of the year, opposition parties and individual non-governmental organisations teamed up on some political concerns, which could indicate an emerging consolidation of the opposition camp which had hitherto been weak and fragmented.

3.7. **Serbia**

The Serbian government that had won the 2008 elections with its pro-European stance, continued to work consistently towards approximation to the
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EU. The most important and, from the people’s point of view, most visible effect of the government’s reform efforts in the field of justice and home affairs was visa liberalisation granted by the EU and becoming effective on 19 December. While the ratification process for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement still remained suspended, the Interim Agreement, which covers trade and trade-related issues, has been applied unilaterally by Serbia since 30 January. Following a positive report by ICTY Chief Prosecutor Brammertz, the Council on 8 December agreed that the EU de-block the Interim Agreement. This move had long been rejected particularly by the Netherlands, as the last two ICTY indictees had neither been arrested nor extradited. On 22 December, Serbia submitted its application for EU membership.

The Issue of Kosovo remains the second priority on Serbia’s foreign policy agenda. The Serbian government insisted on its position and continued its comprehensive diplomatic initiative aimed at combating the recognition of Kosovo’s independence. Serbia rules out any sort of cooperation with the Kosovo government and also refuses to contribute to regional and international fora in which Kosovo government representatives participate. Regarding the municipal elections held by the Kosovo government on 15 November, the Serb government indirectly called on the Serb population of Kosovo to boycott the elections. In addition, the Serb government held new elections conducted on different dates (de facto parallel elections) in several Kosovo municipalities. Only in areas (border control, police protocol with EULEX) which were indispensible for approximation to the EU (visa liberalisation) did the Serbian government pursue a pragmatic approach.

Serbia’s domestic policy agenda was dominated by the fight against the economic crisis which hit the country particularly hard. In countering the crisis, the government focused its efforts first and foremost on taking out loans with various international organisations (mainly with the World Bank, which granted the country a credit facility of 3.3 billion euros until April 2011). But the government also adopted an austerity budget which provides especially for job cuts in the public service sector. Serbia has, however, not yet implemented a full-fledged structural reform (especially of the pension system), which might be attributable to the extremely varied interests within the heterogeneous governing coalition. Along with the leading governing party DS (headed by President Boris Tadic), the Progress Party (SNS), which had split away from the Radical Party in September 2008, succeeded in establishing itself as the second major party steering a pro-European centre right course.

4. The Eastern European States

4.1. Ukraine

Ukraine is a target country of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and participates in the Eastern Partnership (EP), which was incepted as a special
Eastern dimension of ENP on 9 May. The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), in effect since 1998, and the EU Action Plan, adopted under the ENP in February 2005, form the basis of the country’s relations with the EU. Negotiations on a successor agreement to the PCA were launched in February 2007. At the EU-Ukraine Summit held in Evian in September 2008, it was decided that this PCA successor agreement be named association agreement. The negotiation mandate provides for a broad-based agreement whose central element will consist of a deepened and comprehensive free trade area. Ukraine’s accession to the WTO on 16 May 2008 prepared the ground for negotiations on such a free trade area. 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. On 1 January 2008, both the Readmission Agreement and the Visa Facilitation Agreement came into force. The dialogue between the EU and Ukraine on exemption from the visa requirement was initiated in November 2008. Ukraine had long hoped to sign the Association Agreement at the EU-Ukraine summit in Kiev on 4 December. This ambitious goal was, however, thwarted owing to the complicated nature of the free trade negotiations.

Making available more than 2.5 billion euros, the EU is Ukraine’s largest foreign donor. Following expiry of the TACIS programme and the transition to the ENPI (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument), the funds earmarked for Ukraine saw a substantial increase. Under the ENPI National Indicative Programme, the country now receives 494 million euros for the 2007–2010 period (about 120 million euros per year). This sum is supplemented by some further 20 million euros per year from other programmes (regional and cross-border programmes, nuclear safety, landmines, European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) etc.). Moreover, the EU is Ukraine’s largest trading partner, just ahead of Russia. Cooperation between Ukraine and the EU under EUBAM (Border Assistance Mission; at the border to Moldova) is continuing successfully.

The global financial and economic crisis hit the country particularly hard, the negative impact being felt from autumn 2008 on. Against this background, a relaunch of the “orange coalition”, also involving the “Lytvyn Bloc“, was formed on 16 December 2008. The deep conflict between the Prime Minister and the President, however, continued unabated. The Ukraine slipped into the expected credit crisis combined with a massive decline in exports and imports. The situation was further aggravated by the high current account deficit amounting to at least 15 billion US dollars. As a result of the difficult economic condition, the budget situation remains extremely critical – but the country still has foreign currency reserves of 27 billion US dollars.

The crisis contributed to aggravating the chronic structural deficits of Ukraine’s economy. The IMF earmarked financial assistance of 16.4 billion US dollars to support the country and first payments were made. The issue of whether these funds are being used correctly is, however, subject to contro-
versy. The government had actually adopted a package of measures to fulfil the requirements stipulated by the IMF, but from the IMF’s point of view, the actions taken are absolutely insufficient. In the face of the presidential election campaign, the political players lacked the readiness to implement massive spending and cost cuts. In late autumn, the IMF eventually refused to pay out the fourth instalment and postponed its relevant decision to the period after the presidential elections on 17 January/7 February 2010.

After the post of Ukrainian foreign minister had been vacant for some time, it was filled by industrial magnate Petro Poroshenko on 9 October. The positions of ministers for finance, defence as well as transport and telecommunications remained, however, vacant as the respective officeholders had been dismissed in the course of the year.

Despite its chronic financial difficulties, the national gas supplier Naftogas succeeded in punctually paying for the gas supplies from Gazprom – thanks to support granted by the Ukrainian government and the IMF, thus avoiding gas supply conflicts with Russia.

At the end of October, the outbreak of the “new flu” in Ukraine made it necessary for the government to adopt far-reaching measures (quarantine plus the closing of schools), which led to some panic among the population. Austria contributed to international assistance efforts by sending relief supplies.

The presidential elections on 17 January 2010 (first ballot) were the dominant issue during the second half of the year. A total of 18 candidates were running for the office including President Victor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, opposition leader Victor Yanukovych, Speaker of Parliament Volodymyr Lytvyn, industrial magnate Sergey Tigipko, former Foreign Minister and Parliamentary Speaker Arseniy Yatsenyuk and a number of other well-known political figures.

4.2. Moldova

Following the presidential elections on 5 April, the Communist Party, which had emerged victorious according to official results, was accused of massive electoral fraud and people took to the streets. In responding to these sometimes violent demonstrations that went on for days, police committed human rights violations. During their visits to Chisinau, EU High Representative for the CFSP, Javier Solana, and President of the European Council, Mirek Topolánek, expressed their concern over these events and called for investigations into the human rights situation. After the election of a Head of State by parliament had failed twice, the parliamentary elections were repeated in line with the constitution on 29 July. The victorious liberal-democratic alliance “Alliance for European Integration” assumed governmental responsibility in September. The most important goals defined by the new government are rapprochement to the EU to the greatest possible extent, overcoming the political and social division of the country as well as implementing
an ambitious programme of economic reforms. Furthermore, the new government succeeded in reaching agreement with the IMF on a loan of 521 million euros. The newly elected parliament, however, failed twice in its attempts to elect a Head of State.

The EU is one of the largest donors to the Republic of Moldova, which was hit very hard by the global economic crisis. For the period 2007–2010, the EU has earmarked external assistance totalling 209.7 million euros for the country. In June, the EU Council adopted negotiating directives for a new Partnership and Association Agreement. Negotiations were to be launched in January 2010.

Moldova is a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and of several regional South Eastern European initiatives. From June 2008 to June 2009, the country, for instance, held the Presidency of the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP). The CIS Heads of State and Government summit convened in Chisinau on 8 to 9 October.

While in the separatist region of Transnistria a draft for constitutional reform aimed at further strengthening his position and presented by the authoritarian “President” of Transnistria, Igor Smirnov, was rejected by parliament, the power struggle between Smirnov and the former Speaker of Parliament, Yevgeny Shevchuk, ended with the latter’s resignation. Despite the EU’s efforts aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures, it had not been possible to achieve any approximation between the Transnistrian regime and the Moldovan government. As part of his mediation efforts, the EU Special Representative Kalman Mizsei paid several visits to the region. For further information on the OSCE and Moldova/Transnistria see B.II.2.

The EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) that had been set up in 2005, continues to work successfully and was temporarily extended until November 2011.

4.3. Belarus

The EU sanctions against Belarus, which had been relaxed by the Council decision of 13 October 2008, remained in place but were not tightened further in 2009. On the one hand, the limited suspension of the travel restriction imposed on President Alexander Lukashenko and the majority of members and affected officials of the Belarus leadership, adopted in 2008, were extended in March and December (currently until October 2010). On the other hand, Belarus used the lifting of the restriction on bilateral government contacts to engage in an intensive series of diplomatic visits. President Lukashenko visited Italy and Lithuania, while Foreign Minister Sergej Martynov paid visits to the EU in Brussels, Germany, Italy, Finland, Austria and the Czech Republic. EU HR for the CFSP, Javier Solana, and EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner accepted invitations to Minsk. Visits to
Belarus were also paid by several Heads of State and foreign ministers of EU Member States.

In May, Belarus was represented at the Prague Eastern Partnership (EP) Summit. Belarus considers its participation as a starting point for a gradual “normalisation” of its relationship with the EU and as a means to foster foreign trade and investment. Yet, in contrast to the other EP partner states, the EU will for the time being not offer an Action Plan to Belarus, as there is no Partnership and Cooperation Agreement in force. Such a move would require clear proof provided by the Belarus authorities of their willingness to fully respect democratic values and the rule of law. From the EU’s point of view, however, measures taken so far, like the release of political prisoners or the liberalisation of election laws adopted at the end of the year, are not far-reaching enough to be considered an irreversible change of course towards development of democracy and the rule of law. Should there be a fundamental change in the situation in Belarus and its relationship to the EU, the EU would in future be willing to substantially increase its support in several key areas in which support is currently not possible.

The international economic and financial crisis led to a drop in the country’s exports both to Western Europe (processed petroleum products) and to the Russian Federation (foodstuffs, textiles, machines). Against this background, the agreements reached with the IMF in November on potential financial assistance and on a customs union with Russia and Kazakhstan (due to enter into force on 1 January 2010) were thus all the more important for Belarus.

4.4. South Caucasus

The three South Caucasian states Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia continued their rapprochement with Euro-Atlantic structures. A closer forging of these countries’ ties with the EU was enabled by the Eastern Partnership, launched on 7 May in Prague at a summit held with the partner countries. Provided sufficient progress is made with regard to common values like democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights as well as market economic principles, sustainable development and good governance. Cooperation under the Eastern Partnership is to serve as the basis for new Association Agreements between the EU and the partner countries.

The situation in Armenia is marked by strong polarisation. In March, an event commemorating the first anniversary of the unrest in the aftermath of the 2008 elections was attended by thousands of opposition followers. In the municipal elections held in Yerevan on 31 May, mayor Gagik Beglarian of the Republican Party was re-elected to office winning 47.4 per cent of the votes. The main problem faced by Armenia over the last few years has been its isolation at foreign political level. On 10 October, Armenia and Turkey signed two protocols in Zurich aimed at achieving a normalisation of mutual relations including the start of bilateral relations and the opening of their com-
mon borders. If ratified by both parliaments, these protocols would indeed represent the most important development by far in the South Caucasus.

In **Azerbaijan**, an amendment to the constitution was adopted by referendum (with about 92 per cent of the votes in favour) on 18 March. The amendment inter alia provides for the lifting of the restriction to two terms in office for the president. From the EU’s point of view, the human rights situation and the level of independence of the judiciary are unsatisfactory and the situation concerning freedom of the media has deteriorated. With respect to freedom of assembly, certain progress is discernible.

In **Georgia**, President Mikheil Saakashvili announced early local elections, an electoral law reform (direct election of mayors), a reform of the media law and a reduction in presidential powers. The opposition found it hard to accept defeat at the 2008 presidential elections and in spring attempted to force President Saakashvili’s resignation with several months of demonstrations and blockades of important transport routes in Tbilisi. Moderate opposition members, however, entered into the dialogue offered by Saakashvili.

In contrast to the agreements of 12 August and 8 September 2008, Russian soldiers continue to be stationed in the separatist regions of **Abkhazia** and **South Ossetia**, which contributes to the tense relations between Georgia and Russia. In South Ossetia, businessman Vadim Brovtsev was installed as new “Prime Minister” on 5 August. In Abkhazia, “presidential elections” were held on 12 December from which incumbent “President” Sergei Bagapsh emerged victorious over four other candidates. Mediation efforts under the **Geneva Talks** chaired jointly by the EU, the UN and the OSCE involving the participation of the USA were continued. Two conflict prevention mechanisms were established to help avoid border incidents. Negotiations focus on an agreement on the non-use of force as well as international security arrangements and humanitarian issues. The attitude, adopted by Abkhazia in these talks, is more open than that of South Ossetia. In this context, mediation efforts undertaken by **EU Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia**, Pierre Morel, and the **EUSR for the South Caucasus**, Peter Semneby, both within Georgia and towards other countries in the region such as Russia, Armenia and Turkey, have made a very valuable contribution.

After Russia had prevented the extension of both the UN and the OSCE missions in July, the EU Monitoring Mission (**EUMM**), set up in September 2008, has remained the only international presence on the ground. Its tasks include monitoring full compliance by all sides with the 2008 Six-Point Agreement throughout the entire Georgian territory. However, EUMM still has no access to the separatist regions where it could make an important contribution to a normalisation of the situation by engaging in confidence-building measures. In July, EUMM’s mandate was extended by a further year until September 2010.
There have been repeated arrests of Georgian nationals at the administrative borders to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. These and similar incidents are dealt with under the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism (IPRM).
For more information on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict see B.II.2.3.

5. Russia

The hoped-for domestic liberalisation associated with the assumption of office by President Dmitry Medvedev continued to progress only slowly. Foreign policy was characterised by a normalisation of relations with the EU, the USA and NATO, although progress was largely restricted to improving the general mood. Considerable approximation between the USA and Russia was registered with respect to the future of the START Treaty. The Russian attitude towards the Iranian nuclear programme remained high on the agenda where relations with the EU and the USA were concerned. Russia’s position towards controversial issues such as the Georgia conflict remained unchanged.

Thanks to government support and relatively favourable developments of external factors like oil prices and global economic development, the Russian economy fared quite well. The challenge to be faced in this context both now and for the future relates to the structural modernisation of the Russian economy called for by Medvedev. In this context, Russia has signalled interest in expanding its relations to the EU into a “partnership for modernisation”.

Negotiations on an EU-Russia Framework Agreement (successor to the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement of 1994) have been ongoing since July 2008 but have seen only little tangible progress. Although the two EU-Russia Summits in Khabarovsk on 21 and 22 May and in Stockholm on 18 November contributed to improving the discussion climate and strengthening mutual trust, they did not result in significant convergence of views on controversial issues.

The EU remains Russia’s most important economic partner. In the face of the economic crisis, Russia, however, increasingly resorted to targeted protectionist measures (such as customs tariff increases for motor vehicles). In June, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin announced that Russia was ending its separate WTO accession negotiations and instead intended to engage in joint accession negotiations as part of a customs union with Belarus and Kazakhstan (due to enter into effect on 1 January). Shortly after this announcement, President Medvedev, however, pointed out that Russia’s separate accession to the WTO was the simpler and more realistic option. From the European Commission’s point of view, accession negotiations under this customs union would further delay the progress in Russia’s WTO accession.

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

The Russian-Ukrainian gas crisis in January shifted energy relations between the EU and Russia back into the spotlight. In November, the EU and Russia agreed on an Early Warning Mechanism to improve prevention and management in case of an energy crisis, particularly with a view to preventing disruptions to supplies. Russia made progress concerning the two gas pipeline projects Nord Stream and South Stream. In autumn, approval for laying the Nord Stream pipelines within the respective exclusive economic zones was granted by Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Germany. In May, Gazprom and the gas companies of Italy, Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria concluded an agreement on setting up South Stream (the necessary agreements at government level had already been concluded earlier). In November, Slovenia’s participation in the project was agreed on. November also saw the initiation of negotiations on Austria’s participation in the South Stream project.

The EU reacted to Russia’s initial reservations about the Eastern Partnership by arguing that an enhanced Union commitment in the common neighbourhood will contribute to promoting stability and prosperity in the entire region and is thus in the common interest of all.

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, a doubling of EU funds earmarked for Central Asia and the preparation of National Priority Papers for each individual country in the region which are reviewed and adapted annually in coordination with the five countries. With a view to strengthening regional cooperation, the EU continued the three initiatives it had launched in the areas of education, the rule of law, as well as environment and water. Political dialogue was also further intensified: on 29 May the EU Troika at ministers of foreign affairs’ level and Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner met with the foreign ministers of the five Central Asian states. On 15 September, an EU-Central Asia Ministerial Conference meeting was held in the same format in Brussels and also involved representatives from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Deliberations focused on the fight against human trafficking, drugs and terrorism, extremism and proliferation as well as water, energy and environmental security. The EU long-term programmes for Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) and the Central Asia Drug Action Programme (CADAP) were continued. Moreover, the EU also held human rights dialogues with all five Central Asian countries.
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issue of water management is one of potential tension in the entire region and also dominated the Aral Sea summit held by the five Central Asian presidents in Almaty on 28 April.

EU support for the funding period 2007–2013 totals 750 million euros. While imports from Central Asia to the EU experienced a decline of almost 50 per cent, EU exports to Central Asia remained stable.

At the EU-Kazakhstan Cooperation Council meeting on 17 November, the Union commended Kazakhstan on its active and stabilising role in the region, highlighted the potential in the field of energy cooperation but also addressed the need for strengthening the investment climate. Kazakhstan, in turn, expressed its desire for a new contractual basis with the EU. The impact of the global economic and financial crisis was also felt in Kazakhstan. A road map adopted by the government served to implement the anti-crisis programme that supported the hard hit banking and real estate sector, the country’s small and medium-sized enterprises, agriculture and infrastructure and promoted innovation with some 14 billion US dollars in total and created 400,000 jobs. Major strategically important infrastructure projects like the new oil and natural gas pipeline to China were made operational and work on the construction of the Western Europe – Western China International Transit Corridor continued. With a view to meeting its obligations in connection with the OSCE Chairmanship in 2010, the Kazakh government adopted reforms relating to the media, elections and political parties. In the eyes of both opposition and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) these reforms were, however, not extensive enough. Furthermore, the government adopted an Internet Act which restricted freedom of opinion, and legislation on the protection of privacy. Independence of the judiciary system still fails to meet international standards. On 9 December, the United Nations Central Asia Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC) was opened in Almaty.

Since 25 November, the European Commission has been represented with a fully fledged delegation in Kyrgyzstan. The presidential elections held in Kyrgyzstan on 23 July were clearly won by the incumbent Kurmanbek Bakiyev. According to OSCE/ODIHR, the elections did not meet international standards. In October, President Bakiyev initiated a large-scale administrative reform. Since then, the State Ministry for Foreign Affairs has reported directly to the President. 2009 saw a further deterioration of the human rights situation in the country. Thanks to generous Russian loans the negative effects of the global economic and financial crisis were cushioned to some extent.

Following completion of the ratification process in November, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Tajikistan was due to enter into force on 1 January 2010. Tajikistan is interested in establishing intensified relations with the EU Member States, placing a particular focus on economic cooperation and investment in the hydro power sector. So far,
Tajikistan has been the only Central Asian country to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding with the European Investment Bank. On 11 February, President Emomalii Rahmon paid an official visit to Brussels. Of all Central Asian countries, Tajikistan was hardest hit by the global economic and financial crisis.

Due to lack of ratification by some EU Member States, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Turkmenistan has not entered into force yet. By the end of the year the ratification process had, however, been completed by 25 Member States including Austria. The Interim Agreement which covers trade and trade-related issues between the EU and Turkmenistan was adopted by the Council on 27 July. On 14 December, the Turkmenistan-China gas pipeline traversing some 7,000 kilometres was officially opened.

In the course of the administrative reform launched by Uzbekistan, the country’s Security Council and Foreign Ministry were abolished and their tasks transferred to the President’s state committee for defence, security and the rule of law and the State Minister for Foreign Affairs. On 20 October, the entire government led by Prime Minister Igor Chudinov resigned. On 21 October, the then head of the Presidential Administration and former mayor of Bishkek Daniar Usenov was appointed Prime Minister and confirmed in his new function by parliament. On 27 October, the EU’s General Affairs Council decided not to extend the restrictive measures still in place against Uzbekistan (travel restrictions on several high-level figures and government representatives) in order to encourage the country to make further substantial progress towards improving the human rights and rule of law situations.

The first round of parliamentary and regional elections was held on 27 December, the second was scheduled for 10 January 2010.

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

7.1. Middle East Peace Process

The end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009 were marked by a massive escalation of military conflict in and at the borders to the Gaza Strip. On 27 December 2008, the Israeli armed forces had started to launch air strikes against targets in the Gaza Strip with the declared goal of destroying Hamas’ armed structures. The objective was to bring an end to the threat the missile fire from the Gaza Strip posed to the civilian population in southern Israel. Only after more than three weeks and an unprecedented number of civilian victims and destruction of economic infrastructure particularly on the Palestinian side, the escalation of the conflict came to an end following unilateral proclamations of a ceasefire by Israel and Hamas on 18 January.

Right from its first day as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, Austria was directly confronted with the critical develop-
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ments in the Middle East and actively involved in the efforts aimed at securing a ceasefire. Regrettably, central calls made by Security Council resolution 1860 (2009), particularly with respect to the opening of the border crossings to the Gaza Strip in order to guarantee the comprehensive supply of the civilian population, were to remain unfulfilled throughout the entire year.

In one of his first foreign policy keynote addresses given on 14 June, the new Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu committed himself in principle to a two-state solution, whilst limiting this commitment with a call for demilitarisation of a future Palestinian state and the recognition of Israel as the state of the Jewish people. In insisting on Jerusalem as the undivided capital of Israel and the continuation of the construction of settlements in the spirit of natural growth, he thus represented political positions that were incompatible with the Palestinian leadership’s expectations regarding resumption of the negotiation process.

US President Obama’s strong criticism of Israeli settlement policy in his speech addressed to the Arab public in Cairo on 4 June as well as his comprehensive commitment to a two-state solution had encouraged the Palestinian leadership to call for a full settlement stop as a prerequisite for opening negotiations with the new Israeli government. Subsequently, US Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process, former Senator George Mitchell, tried in vain to lead the conflict parties back to the negotiation table. Only after Prime Minister Netanyahu had announced a ten month moratorium on settlement construction in the West Bank, the first opportunities for approximation of the frozen positions started to open up towards the end of the year.

With respect to the situation in the Palestinian territories there was no indication of any substantial improvement. The division between the West Bank and the Hamas-dominated Gaza Strip deepened further. Maintenance of a minimum level of public services by the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was only possible thanks to the unabated generous assistance provided by the international community. The year 2009 also marked the 60th anniversary of UNRWA’s creation.

After the events of the year 2008 had nourished hope for progress between Israel and Syria concerning the Golan Heights which Israel had occupied in 1967 and annexed since 1980, the prospects for a continuation of the indirect talks mediated by Turkey were to be thwarted not least by conflicting opinion on the Gaza Strip. Clearly critical remarks by top level Turkish representatives vis-à-vis Israel led to a deterioration in Israeli-Turkish relations and prevented a resumption of these indirect talks for the time being.

In their Conclusions adopted at the December Council, the EU foreign ministers laid down in detail their positions on the Middle East Peace Process and reaffirmed Europe’s commitment to a comprehensive peaceful solution.
with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security with Jerusalem as the future capital of two states.

7.2. Middle East

The EU supports Iraq through numerous initiatives aimed at fostering national reconciliation, constitutional revision, return of refugees and strengthening the powers of the Iraqi Parliament.

On 31 January, elections were held in 14 of the 18 provinces. These elections were the first to have been both organised and monitored exclusively by Iraq. In Kirkuk and the three provinces of the Kurdish region, regional parliamentary and presidential elections were held on 25 June. The incumbent President and leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) Massoud Barzani was confirmed in office winning about 70 per cent of the votes. National parliamentary elections are scheduled for 7 March 2010.

The EU supports the Iraqi authorities also with respect to the necessary improvement in the provision of basic services. In March, the EU decided to extend the rule of law mission EUJUST LEX until 30 June 2010. The mission’s mandate covers the promotion of both the rule of law and human rights in Iraq. Since July, training seminars organised in this context have been held in both EU Member States as well as in Iraq. Negotiations between the EU and Iraq on a Trade and Cooperation Agreement were concluded in November.

In Iran, presidential elections were held on 12 June, from which incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad officially emerged victorious with 63 per cent of the vote and ahead of his most important challenger, Mir-Hossein Mousavi, who won 34 per cent of the vote. The announcement of the official election result triggered several weeks of protests, which were suppressed by the security forces also using violence. According to the Iranian authorities 4,000 arrests were made and about 30 people lost their lives during these events. The numbers given by opposition sources were, however, far higher. The EU condemned the use of force against demonstrators, the numerous arrests made and the fact that the trials did not fulfil minimum requirements for fair trials. The EU also expressed its concern over the human rights situation and particularly the situation of minorities like the Baha’i.

The developments in connection with the Iranian nuclear programme are followed with concern by the international community. After 15 months without direct talks, Iran and the E3+3 (the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the permanent UNSC members USA, Russia and China) resumed their dialogue on the Iranian nuclear programme in Geneva on 1 October. During these discussions, several confidence-building measures were considered including the inspection of the Iranian nuclear power plant in Ghom by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which took place on 25 October and was discussed in a report presented by the IAEA on 16 November. Furthermore, the E3+3 suggested that Iran have the major part of its low
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enriched uranium further enriched in the Russian Federation and subsequently processed into fuel rod elements in France, which would guarantee the further operation of the Teheran research reactor that produces medical isotopes for cancer treatment. By the end of the year, Iran had not agreed to this offer. On 20 November, the E3+3 convened for their most recent talks about a solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. On 27 November, the IAEA adopted a resolution calling upon Iran to clarify open issues concerning its nuclear programme and to cooperate fully. The EU continues to consider the so-called dual-track approach (diplomatic negotiations with Iran in parallel with a tightening of sanctions in the event of non-cooperation) to be the appropriate course of action.

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. Following restructuring and expansion it was renamed “Union for the Mediterranean” in 2008. It comprises all EU Member States, all Mediterranean countries – except for Libya which has not participated since 2008 – as well as Jordan and Mauritania.

Over a period of several months, the Gaza conflict that had broken out at the beginning of the year made it impossible for the Euro-Mediterranean partners to convene for their regular Senior Official and/or Ministerial level conferences – which marked the most severe crisis the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had experienced since its creation. Against this background, political dialogue on the Middle East Peace Process was the paramount topic when the regular meetings at Senior Official level were resumed. On 25 June, a first and as yet still informal ministerial meeting dealing with sustainable development projects was held in Paris.

Regular Euro-Mediterranean Ministerial Conferences did not take place until the second half of the year: on the Economy, Finances and the Euromed Credit Line granted by the European Investment Bank (EIB) in Brussels on 27 July, on Strengthening the Role of Women in Society in Marrakesh on 11 and 12 November, and on Trade in Brussels on 9 December. It was, however, necessary to postpone the meeting of environmental ministers in Dubrovnik as well as the foreign ministers’ conference. The latter usually convenes annually and was scheduled to be held in Istanbul this year.

In line with the resolution passed at the Marseille Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in 2008, preparatory work was begun on the status of the Secretariat, which is to be based in Barcelona.

The Anna-Lindh Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (see also K.VII.2) started to implement its Three-Year Programme for the 2009–2011 period.
The plenary of the **Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (EMPA)** was held in Brussels on 16 and 17 March. Chaired by Member of the Austrian Federal Council Stefan Schennach, two sessions of the Ad hoc Committee on Energy, Environment and Water were held: in Vienna on 18 May and in Linz on 12 October. Since September, EMPA representatives have attended meetings at Senior Official level as observers.

### 7.4. Gulf Cooperation Council

As the EU’s most important trading partner in the Arab world, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which is composed of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, is of special strategic importance to the Union. The GCC accounts for roughly two fifths of the EU’s entire trade with the Arab states. Furthermore, the Gulf region is evolving into 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.

The negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement, ongoing between the EU and the GCC since 1991, were declared suspended by the GCC at its summit held at the end of 2008. Thus the focus of deliberations at the 19th EU-GCC Joint Council and the Ministerial Meeting in Muscat (Oman) on 29 April was on political topics like the Middle East Peace Process and the Iranian nuclear programme. Although several informal meetings were held by the negotiation partners to discuss the Free Trade Agreement, it was still not possible to reach agreement on the most important items (tax issues and the inclusion of human rights into the scope of the agreement).

### 8. North America

#### 8.1. United States of America

On 20 January, **President Barack Obama took office**. However, the transition to the new administration was not fully completed by the end of the year. President Obama commenced his term in office enjoying extraordinarily high popularity rates, both within the USA and abroad. By the end of the year, however this “honeymoon” period was over with President Obama’s popularity shrinking from 65 per cent at the beginning of his presidency to about 45 per cent in December. Furthermore, the administration’s work was additionally complicated by disagreement among the Democratic representatives, who hold a vast majority in both Houses, and the Republicans’ coherently negative position taken on important legislative projects and particularly on reform of the health system.

In 2009, the Democrats held 58 seats in the **Senate**, the Republicans 40 and two seats were held by independent senators associated with the Democratic Caucus. In the **House of Representatives** the Democrats also held a majority
of 257 seats, while only 178 of its members were Republicans. Among the Democrats, the “blue dogs” play a special role. This group of Congressional Representatives, which was founded in 1995, is characterised by fiscal and social conservatism with security policy ranking high on their agenda. The blue dogs see themselves as a conservative counterweight to the leftist tendencies in the Democratic Party, understanding their role as that of a link between Republican and Democratic Representatives. Consequently, they are courted by both parties.

Domestic discussions were marked by the economic situation and the reform of the health care sector. The economic situation has improved compared to when President Obama took office (+2.8% growth in the third quarter). Recovery is, however, still overshadowed by double digit unemployment rates, the sustained credit squeeze and spending restraint among consumers and companies. The administration has given priority to fighting recession over deficit reduction. The readiness to make additional funds available for stimulus measures conflicts with the commitment to consolidating public finances.

Although the final decision on the large-scale health care reform, which particularly aims to reduce the number of US citizens without health insurance, was on the horizon towards the end of the year, it was, however, not adopted. The original draft had been diluted during months of difficult negotiations, which had led to criticism that the reforms were no longer sufficiently comprehensive to achieve the clear expansion and efficiency increase of the health care system the bill was striving for.

In shaping its foreign policy, the Obama administration placed an increasingly strong focus on diplomacy, dialogue and international cooperation. The change of tone in this context was striking: President Obama conceded past deficits in US politics, intends to lead by example instead of “proselytising” and offered a “new start” to numerous partners, particularly Russia and the Muslim world.

In his first year in office, President Obama achieved his goal of improving Trans-Atlantic relations. He paid six visits to Europe, gave speeches that attracted much attention (like in Prague on 5 April) and participated in two EU-US summits. The EU and the USA agree that such enhanced framework conditions should be seized in order to make real progress in a time marked by globalisation and rising importance of other global political players (including China and India).

Just one day after taking office, President Obama had ordered the closure of the Guantanamo detention facility. Owing to substantial, mainly legal problems the actual closure of the detention facility is, however, likely to be delayed. Moreover, the possibility to temporarily detain individuals suspected of terrorism might be retained for the time being. At the same time, President Obama renounced torture as an interrogation method and
confirmed the USA’s compliance with the Geneva Convention. According to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, US human rights policy towards third countries is based on “principled pragmatism”.

Concerning Iraq, President Obama set out an exit strategy involving the withdrawal of all combat troops by August 2010 and a transitional force of 35,000 – 50,000 troops to remain in the country until the end of 2011 and focusing on strengthening the development of civilian structures. The USA’s new Afghanistan strategy is of particular importance: it is based on the deployment of a further 30,000 troops, the strengthening of civilian development activities and close cooperation with Pakistan. In its relations with Iran, the USA and its partners pursue a dual-track approach: by directly engaging with Iran and through international diplomacy a solution to the nuclear dispute is sought, while at the same time maintaining the focus on tightened sanctions against Iran – to be imposed primarily by the UN Security Council – should there be no diplomatic solution to the conflict.

In 2009, 52 individuals were executed in the USA, representing a rise of about 40 per cent over the previous year (37 executions). This is the first rise in the number of executions since 2001. However, the number of death sentences passed in 2009 is the lowest since the re-introduction of capital punishment in 1976.

8.2. Canada

In contrast to numerous predictions to the contrary, Canada did not see early elections in 2009. The minority government led by the Conservative Party under Prime Minister Stephen Harper, who has been in office since the beginning of 2007, continued to hold government responsibility. On the domestic front, the focus was on measures aimed at countering the international financial and economic crisis, which had not stopped short of Canada either, although the country was somewhat less affected than the majority of the other OECD Member Countries. The draft budget 2009/2010 presented at the end of January was key to the continuation of Harper’s minority government. The draft, which covered far-reaching measures to stimulate the economy, was subsequently adopted by parliament. According to economic experts, the government’s stimulus package would cushion the impacts of the financial crisis in Canada. Although the country’s economy shrank by more than 5 per cent in the first quarter of 2009, it later started to recover slowly with positive growth rates appearing for the first time in September and October. By the end of the year unemployment rates had also declined slightly to 8.5 per cent.

Attempts by the Liberal Party under Michael Ignatieff to precipitate early elections in autumn failed. A motion of no-confidence introduced by the Liberal Party against the Conservative minority government at the end of September was not supported by the other opposition parties in parliament.
The Liberal Party’s strategy of prompting early elections in economically difficult times proved unpopular and translated into a massive decline in the Liberal Party’s popularity ratings. This, in turn, was of particular benefit to the Harper government, which succeeded in consolidating its position, also assisted by the emerging end of the recession.

At foreign policy level the Harper government focused on continuity. Canada’s explicit foreign policy priorities included strengthening relations with the USA, the Americas, China and India. Canada’s military engagement in Afghanistan remained another priority on the foreign policy agenda, in which context the country intends to discontinue its military presence in the Province of Kandahar after 2011. High-level visits paid to these regions, the most recent taking place in November and December, took Prime Minister Harper to India and China and served to underline these priorities. At the UN level, Canada submitted its candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2011-2012. Against the background of recession and international economic crisis, free trade and the conclusion of free trade agreements were of major concern to the Harper government. In this context, relations between Canada and the EU also gained new momentum.

8.3. The Institutionalised Transatlantic Dialogue

8.3.1. The Institutionalised EU-US Dialogue

The EU and the USA are each others’ most important trading partners, which also has a direct positive impact on the respective labour market. For this reason cooperation in the economic segment is one of the Transatlantic 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 TEC, which convenes roughly twice a year, consists of preparing the annual summit. In terms of agenda, the TEC’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 developing solutions. Another of the TEC’s tasks is the institutionalisation of the various dialogue fora. The fourth TEC meeting was held in Washington on 27 October.

The first formal EU-USA Summit under the new US administration, held in Washington on 3 November, saw the concrete implementation of both partners’ efforts towards revitalising and deepening transatlantic relations. In this spirit, an EU-US Energy Council was established at ministers’ level.
The Council, which is to deal with issues relating to bilateral cooperation and energy security, convened for its first meeting on 4 November. Furthermore, a high-level dialogue on innovation was set up (under the TEC), a task force on urgent antimicrobial resistance created, new momentum added to the development dialogue and a Joint Declaration on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament adopted.

By adopting a Joint EU-US declaration on the improvement of transatlantic cooperation in the fields of justice, freedom and security at the Washington Summit on 28 October, the two partners provided clear proof of their intention to also further intensify relations in these areas.

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 as well as the EU-Canada Partnership Agenda of 2004. Numerous meetings at various levels held by working groups, expert groups, senior-level public officials and political representatives create the foundation for the political dialogue between the EU and Canada.

The EU-Canada Summit, held in Prague on 6 May, agreed to launch negotiations on a comprehensive economic partnership agreement. The first round of negotiations on this agreement, which are to be concluded within two years, took place in Ottawa in October. In December, the EU and Canada signed an aviation agreement that provides for a comprehensive opening of the market and the liberalisation of bilateral air transport.

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 2008, the volume of trade between the NAFTA states more than tripled and in terms of volume rose from 297 billion to 946 billion US dollars.

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

9.1. Political Developments

In Latin America, presidential elections were held in Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Uruguay. In Chile, a first ballot took place. Parliamentary elections were held in Argentina, Mexico, Panama and Uruguay. 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, problems were mainly solved through political means and the democratic institutions were not called into question. However, the only exception was Honduras, where the president was ousted and exiled. The ensuing crisis left the region politically divided.

The global economic and financial crisis did not stop short of Latin America either. The Latin American economy shrunk for the first time in a number of years and exports declined. Against this background, Latin America has nevertheless demonstrated a remarkable resilience, and according to the UN and the OECD prospects for rapid recovery are brighter on average in this region than predictions for the developed national economies.

In Mexico, President Felipe Calderón continued his reform policy. At the parliamentary elections, held on 5 July, his party, however, suffered defeat – which was attributed to the economic crisis and the deteriorated security situation. At foreign policy level, the process of Mexico’s re-approximation to Latin America was continued. The country’s enhanced presence on the foreign political stage was also reflected in its assumption of the chair of the Rio Group.

In Brazil, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva maintained his political and economic course characterised by the political link between a stability-oriented growth policy, involving measures aimed at improving the social situation, and distributional justice. Thanks to its sound macroeconomic condition, Brazil succeeded in dealing more quickly and more effectively with the international economic and financial crisis than many other countries, although a decline in economic growth and exports was inevitable. At foreign policy level, Brazil seeks to establish itself in various international fora as a partner on a level with the world’s powers and at the same time as the voice of emerging and developing countries in such fora. Brazil is Austria’s most important trading partner in Latin America and at the same time its fourth-largest overseas market.

In Argentina, the electoral platform of President Christína Fernández de Kirchner suffered defeat at the early parliamentary by-elections. The global economic crisis also hit Argentina leading to a decline in economic growth and exports. After Brazil and Mexico, Argentina is Austria’s third-largest trading partner in Latin America.
In **Chile**, the first round of presidential elections held in December resulted in a run-off ballot between the two candidates Piñera and former President Frei. Although the global economic crisis had not left the country unaffected, Chile succeeded in managing quite well. Holding the first Presidency of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), Chile succeeded in putting issues related to regional security on the agenda.

In **Colombia**, the government continued the fight against the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (FARC) which it had been waging for several years now. The issue of monitoring and reintegration of the demobilised former paramilitaries continues to remain problematic. In this context, the improvement of the human rights situation and particularly the issue of compensation for the many civilian victims of the conflict remain major challenges to be faced by the country. Domestic policy was dominated by the struggle for a referendum aimed at enabling President Uribe to run for a third term in office. The conclusion of an agreement with the USA on a new regulation that grants US forces access to Colombian military bases led to tensions with Venezuela.

In **Cuba**, the year was marked by the fight against the economic crisis which was given precedence over all other issues and also entailed the postponement of the Party Congress scheduled for the end of the year. By undertaking a major government reshuffle in March, President Raúl Castro Ruz succeeded in consolidating his power. The key issue on the country’s foreign policy agenda remains its relationship with the USA which has seen minor improvement under the Obama administration. Political dialogue with the EU was continued at various levels. Costa Rica and El Salvador were the last two Latin American States to establish diplomatic relations with Cuba. The Organisation of American States (OAS) lifted the suspension of Cuba’s membership that had been effective since 1962. However, the country does not intend to resume its membership of the OAS. Cuba continues its efforts towards diversification of its external relations.

**Peru** showed robust resilience in reacting to the impact of the international financial crisis and generated a trade surplus. President Alan García Pérez continued his successful economic policy focusing on fighting poverty and promoting reform in the education and health sectors. Peru has contributed actively to the process of bi-regional cooperation between the EU and Latin America and hosted the Fifth EU-LAC Summit in Lima.

In **Venezuela**, a constitutional referendum on the possibility of re-election for an unlimited term for all political offices was successful. The economic crisis further aggravated the country’s problems with inflation and crime. President Hugo Chávez Frias announced his intention to orient Venezuela’s economic and societal model even closer towards a somewhat undefined “Socialism of the 21st Century”. The country’s foreign policy focused on regional cooperation. Through **ALBA** (Alternativa Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América) Chávez seeks to further consolidate the country’s
leadership role in Latin America. Other members of ALBA include Cuba (founding member; December 2004), Bolivia (joined in April 2006) Nicaragua (March 2007), Dominica (January 2008), Honduras (August 2008), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (April 2009), Antigua and Barbuda as well as Ecuador (June 2009).

In Uruguay, José Mujica from the Frente Amplio won the second round of presidential elections. The climate between Argentina and Uruguay is still aggravated by the border blockades which have lasted three years now. On 14 January, Uruguay and Austria signed an agreement on social security in Vienna.

In Nicaragua, the bitter dispute between government and opposition continued. The ban on the president’s re-election was lifted as the result of a controversial decision by the Supreme Court.

In Bolivia, a constitution was adopted based on a referendum. This constitution, which involves the introduction of some fundamental changes in the country’s current governmental and societal system, provides inter alia for a land reform and the introduction of indigenous jurisdiction. In the elections held in December, President Evo Morales was confirmed in office for a further term. At foreign policy level, Bolivia moved closer to Venezuela and Ecuador.

In Ecuador, presidential, parliamentary, provincial authority and mayoral elections – all governed by the new constitution – were held in April. The incumbent President Rafael Correa retained his lead and was sworn in on 10 August for his second term in office (the first under the new constitution, which allows for one re-election). The term in office defined for parliament and president is four years each. In his government programme, Correa attaches particular importance to enhancing the role played by the state in the country’s economy, followed by social programmes and debt service. Ecuador did not extend the treaty that enabled the USA to use the country’s air base in Manta. Following the crisis of 2008, Colombia and Ecuador engaged in dialogue and diplomatic relations were resumed at chargé d’affaires level. In June, the country joined ALBA.

In Honduras, the ousting of President Manuel Zelaya by the military and the judiciary unleashed a serious crisis that not only divided the country itself but also led to a political division of the entire continent. The government formed by Roberto Micheletti in the aftermath of these events was not recognised internationally. However, the election of the new President, Porfirio Lobo, on 29 November, opened up new perspectives.

9.2. Relations with the European Union

9.2.1. The EU-LAC Process

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 Carib-
bean region as well as by an institutionalised political dialogue with the Rio Group. 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 strengthening of relations in the fields of social cohesion, multilateralism, consolidated 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, 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. Cooperation between both regions has been enhanced and further promoted by political and expert-level meetings based on the Final Declaration adopted at the Lima summit.

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

The EU holds regular specialised meetings with the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR, composed of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay as full members), Central America, the Andean Community, Brazil, Mexico and Chile. The 6th meeting of the Joint Council between the European Union and Mexico, held at foreign ministers level, as well as the 14th EU-Chile Association Council meeting convened on the margins of the EU-LAC Foreign Ministers meeting in Prague. At these meetings, the EU and Mexico confirmed their strategic partnership and the EU and Chile agreed to work towards establishing an Association for Development and Innovation. The third EU-Brazil summit in October underlined the strategic partnership and illustrated the intensive level of cooperation in a wide range of areas.

At a meeting between EU and MERCOSUR foreign ministers, also held in Prague on 14 May, the importance of cooperation in both political, trade and business issues was reiterated and the need for further intensifying relations between both regions emphasised. The negotiations on an Association Agreement between the EU and MERCOSUR, launched in 1999, were broken off in October 2004 due to lack of agreement on the final conclusion of negotiations.

Following conversion of the negotiation mandate on a Multi-Party Free Trade Agreement, negotiations between the EU and the Andean Community were
continued with Colombia, Peru and initially also Ecuador. Four rounds of negotiations were thus held from January to June. After the fourth round, Ecuador suspended its further participation and attended the following three rounds of negotiations only as observer. Both Ecuador and Bolivia are still able to join in the negotiations at a later date.

Under the San José Dialogue, the foreign ministers of the EU and the Central American Integration System (SICA) convened at a meeting held in Prague on 14 May. The meeting recognised progress made by Central America in strengthening regional economic integration and the efforts aimed at putting the Framework Agreement on the Establishment of a Customs Union into operation. Negotiations with Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua opened in 2007 on an Association Agreement between the EU and Central America aimed at intensifying political dialogue and facilitating bi-regional trade and investment were initially continued, but suspended until further notice following the coup d’état in Honduras in June.

On 10 December, Haiti signed the Economic Partnership Agreement that had been negotiated between 2002 and 2007 and signed by the EU and the other Cariforum (Caribbean Forum of ACP States) Member States in 2008.

9.3. Regional Integration Fora

The two summits held by the MERCOSUR states focused particularly on open issues relating to economic integration. At the 37th Summit held in Asunción from 23 to 24 July, members adopted a joint declaration on the crisis in Honduras. The latest summit was held in Montevideo on 8 December. The UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) met in Bariloche (Argentina) on 28 August for an extraordinary summit dealing with US access to military bases in Colombia. The Council of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers met in Quito on 15 September.

Under the Central American Integration System (SICA), the Central American states continued their work towards enhanced economic harmonisation.

At their meeting in Lima on 19 August, the foreign ministers of the Andean Community (Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia and Peru) adopted a number of decisions on intensifying cooperation, including in the area of justice.

The 29th Summit of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) held in Lilienendaal (Guyana) from 2 to 5 July adopted declarations dealing with the financial system, agriculture and food security, climate change and development as well as on the situation on the Turks and Caicos Islands.

The 39th General Assembly of the Organisation of American States (OAS) convened in San Pedro Sula (Honduras) on 2 and 3 June and was dedicated to the topic of “Towards a Culture of Non-Violence”.

The 19th Ibero-American Summit was held in Estoril (Portugal) from 30 November to 1 December and focused primarily on innovation.
10. Sub-Saharan Africa

10.1. General Developments

The major hot spots on the African continent, Sudan, Chad, the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes Region as well as Guinea (Conakry) and Madagascar were at the focus of the international community’s peace efforts. The global economic and financial crisis did not stop short of the countries in Africa, although it hit them with some delay. The crisis highlighted the weaknesses inherent in the countries’ governance and financial systems. These structural weaknesses translated into a slowdown of economic growth to about 2 per cent and increasing unemployment rates. Elections were held in Equatorial Guinea, Botswana, Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), Mauretania, Namibia, Niger and South Africa. In December, Austria terminated the deployment of one contingent of the Austria Armed Forces in Chad. Austria’s membership in the United Nations Security Council also added new impetus to Austria’s Africa policy. Following the accreditation of its ambassador to Nigeria as special representative, Austria is for the first time represented in ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States).

10.2. Regional Developments

10.2.1. The Horn of Africa and Central Africa

No progress was made in Eritrea’s conflict with Ethiopia and Djibouti. Attempts by the United Nations towards finding a peaceful solution to its border conflict with Djibouti were unsuccessful due to lack of cooperation on the part of Eritrea with the international community. The country’s lack of willingness to engage in dialogue eventually resulted in sanctions being imposed against Eritrea by the UN Security Council, with Austria also voting in favour. Political dialogue with the EU was, however, resumed.

In Somalia, there was agreement on the formation of a government of national unity. Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, a former opposition member, was appointed President on 31 January. In order to also include the opposition in this institution, the number of members of parliament was doubled. Even so, a major offensive launched by the armed opposition put the government under such pressure that it could only remain in power thanks to support from troops of the African Union (AU) Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). In order to support the country further, an international donors’ conference was organised in Brussels. The south of the country saw clashes between government forces and the Islamist opposition as well as various armed opposition groups (particularly Al-Shabaab und Hizbul Islam). More than half of the population depends on international food aid. Only Puntland and Somaliland succeeded in maintaining a certain degree of fragile stability.

In Sudan, the fragile peace in the east, the poorest part of the country, was strained by flows of refugees from the Horn von Africa. The implementa-
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The implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement proceeded only sluggishly. Although the situation in Darfur has improved due to a reduction in the number and severity of armed clashes, a political solution to the conflict remains to be found. In South Sudan, the number of ethnic and distribution conflicts has increased. The political leaders in Juba and Khartoum committed themselves to observing the international arbitration decision on the contested Abyei province. The elections scheduled for April 2010 are considered an important test of the willingness of all political powers to contribute to the country’s peaceful development. The national election commission has already started with the voter registration processes for these elections. In September, Austria hosted a seminar for members of the Sudanese election authorities. The visit of the Federal Minister’s Special Representative for Africa, Ambassador Georg Lennkh, to Khartoum in October added an important impetus to Austria’s Sudan initiative. The relationship between Sudan and Chad was marked by some rapprochement. Both sides announced their readiness to engage in talks on the implementation of the Tripoli Agreement on control at their common border, signed on 8 February 2006.

10.2.2. Southern Africa

In South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) won its fourth election since 1994 securing 65.9 per cent of the vote. In May, Jacob Zuma was sworn in as President. The challenges to be faced by the new government include the integration of the country’s administration and developing regional-level institutions, reduction of the high unemployment rate and the fight against AIDS. At foreign policy level, South-South cooperation and regional cooperation within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the AU rank high on the agenda. South Africa cooperated particularly with India and Brazil and viewed itself as the voice of Africa in the G20. The country continued to act as mediator in regional conflicts, including in Zimbabwe.

In Angola, the governing party Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA) tried to further expand its position and prepared an amendment to the constitution. Relations to its neighbours were improved. Economic growth was kept at high levels. Angola is one of Africa’s largest crude oil producers with crude oil exports making up more than 80 per cent of the national budget income. The most important tasks on the government’s agenda are the fight against corruption and AIDS as well as landmine clearance.

In Zimbabwe, mediation by South Africa enabled an agreement to be reached in January on a government of national unity involving all parties represented in parliament and led by Head of State and Government Robert Mugabe. The abolition of the Zimbabwe Dollar and the acceptance of hard currencies as means of payment succeeded in stopping hyperinflation. A cholera epidemic claimed more than 4,000 lives.
In *Mozambique*, presidential and parliamentary elections confirmed incumbent President Armando Guebuza President and Prime Minister Luísa Dias Diogo in office.

In *Madagascar*, the mayor of Antananarivo, Andry Rajoelina, assumed power assisted by the army. In spite of mediation efforts by the SADC, the AU and the UN, the situation did not improve and the country remained in turmoil. The international community does not recognise the transitional government led by Rajoelina. Both the SADC and the AU suspended Madagascar’s membership.

10.2.3. The Great Lakes Region

In the *Democratic Republic of the Congo*, developments were initially marked by the arrest of the leader of the rebel movement National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP), Laurent Nkunda, in Rwanda. Under its new leadership, the CNDP signed a peace agreement with the government on 23 March and integrated its armed organisations into the government army FARDC. A joint military action by the Rwandese and the Congolese armed forces against the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) from 20 January to 25 February did not succeed in sustainably weakening the latter. Consequently, the Congolese army launched another offensive (“Kimia II”), which also involved troops from the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). This offensive was, however, also unsuccessful in reaching its objective. It rather brought the UN under fire from international criticism for supporting units of the Congolese armed forces which were responsible for massive human rights violations against civilians. Heavy fighting broke out again in the northwest of the country at the border with Congo-Brazzaville. The government reacted by dispatching armed forces, supported by MONUC, to the region. The army was, however, not successful in countering the unrest. The conflict saw 100,000 people flee their homes. The UN Security Council extended MONUC’s mandate until May 2010. A joint military action by Uganda, the DR of the Congo and South Sudan (“Lightning Thunder”) from 14 December 2008 to 15 March in the east of the DR of the Congo split the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) into small groups.

In *Burundi*, the peace process was continued with the last remaining rebel group, the Forces for National Liberation (FNL). After having deleted the part of its name that referred to the Hutu ethnic group, the FNL was able to register as a political party. In return, it received several posts in the country’s administration. In December, the government of Burundi called upon the UN to recall the head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), for being allegedly too critical of the government.

10.2.4. East Africa

In *Kenya*, the reform process launched following the unrest in 2008 was continued in some areas. A land and police reform was prepared, a Truth,
Justice and Reconciliation Commission formed and an electoral commission set up. A report by the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial Executions denounced the large number of extrajudicial executions by the Kenyan police forces and called for the resignation of the country’s Attorney General and Police Commissioner. The government was not able to agree on a local court to be charged with investigating and clarifying the acts of violence in the run-up to the elections. Thus the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court took the initiative and requested a panel of judges for approval to open investigations. Work on a new constitution, launched in the middle of the year, was concluded at expert level, with the distribution of power between president and prime minister proving the most controversial issue in the relevant discussions between the political camps.

On the Comoros, an amendment to the constitution initiated by President Ahmad Abdallah Mohammed Sambi was confirmed with 93 per cent of the vote in a referendum held on 17 May. The President’s party won the subsequent elections by a wide margin. Both referendum and elections were subject to heavy criticism particularly on the island of Mohéli. Under the previous constitution and the principle of rotation enshrined in it, the next President of the Union would have come from Mohéli in 2010.

10.2.5. West Africa

Over the past few years, West Africa has made major progress in the fields of peace work, security and stability as well as democratic governance. In 2009, however, some countries risked sliding into military-authoritarian governance triggered by manipulation of their constitutions and electoral laws. The risk was highest for states which had only recently succeeded in terminating internal conflicts, like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau and Côte d’Ivoire. Old animosities and weak institutions, lack of reconciliation and peace work, as well as slow-moving reconstruction posed an increasingly high risk. Indications of democracy deficits and the growing cross-border threat posed by terrorism and drug trafficking in the region gave rise to particular concern among the international community. Against the background of these developments, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) accelerated the development of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF), adopted in 2008, and became politically active in Niger and in Guinea. In this context, a roundtable meeting of donors aimed at mobilising funding to support the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan was held in Vienna on 3 December. Through its Regional Action Plan, ECOWAS aims to address the growing problem of illicit drug trafficking, drug abuse and related organised crime in West Africa.

In Nigeria, violent clashes between radical Islamists and security forces in the north of the country killed hundreds of people in July and December. In the Niger Delta, President Umaru Yar’Adua succeeded in restoring calm. The European Commission signed an agreement under which it will make avail-
able 677 million euros between 2009–2013 from the European Development Fund (EDF) to Nigeria to promote peace and security, good governance and human rights, as well as trade and regional integration. Of this amount, 190 million euros are earmarked for supporting conflict resolution and the peace process in the Niger Delta. On a working visit paid by Vice Foreign Minister Bagudu Hirse to Vienna in June, talks focused on cooperation in the healthcare and energy sectors as well as on economic relations in general.

In Niger, President Mamadou Tandja pushed through a referendum on 4 August which had given rise to objections raised by the international community and led to the adoption of a new constitution. President Tandja’s term in office was extended by three years until the end of 2012 and the restriction to two terms in office lifted. In response to this move, ECOWAS suspended Niger’s membership and the EU suspended development assistance and initiated proceedings under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement. Mediated by neighbouring countries Libya and Algeria, a clear detente was brought about in the country’s relations with the Tuareg.

In Mali, the threat to security posed by drug smuggling has increased in the north of the country. After the British government had rejected claims of the radical Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI), the group killed a British tourist. For the first time, the Malian armed forces took also military action against AQMI. An initiative for a regional summit on stability and security in the Sahel countries, launched by Mali’s President Amadou Touré in 2008, had to be postponed yet again due to the difficult economic situation in the region.

In Mauritania, presidential elections were held on 10 July and won by the leader of the military coup of 6 August 2008 and de facto Head of State Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. The new president established a new government under Prime Minister Moulaye Mohamed Laghdaf and relations with the international community were subsequently normalised.

In Gabon, presidential elections were held in August following the death of President Omar Bongo who had governed the country since 1967. The son of the late President, Ali Bongo, won the elections, in the aftermath of which there were riots by the opposition in several cities. With Angélique Ngoma as Defence Minister and Anicette Nang Ovika as Minister of Justice, the new administration is the first to include women in government offices.

In Côte d’Ivoire, presidential elections had to be postponed yet again. As it had not yet been possible to regulate objections against electoral registers in a satisfactory manner, it remained uncertain if the election scheduled for March 2010 would actually be able to take place. On the United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) see Chapter C.

In Senegal, the opposition, which had formed an electoral alliance, was highly successful in the local and regional elections on 23 March and was
able to appoint mayors in the country’s most important cities. President Wade announced to stand again for the 2012 presidential elections.

In Guinea, violence used by police forces against demonstrators on 28 September claimed 150 lives. In response to these events, the EU, the USA, the AU and ECOWAS imposed sanctions against the members of the junta and individuals associated with it. A UN investigation commission found that the massacre had been planned and represented a crime against humanity. After the leader of the junta, Captain Dadis Camara, had been heavily injured in an assassination attempt on 3 December, Minister of Defence, General Sekouba Konaté, assumed power. Acting on a mandate from ECOWAS, the President of Burkina Faso, Blaise Compaoré, began mediation talks between the political camps in Guinea.

In Liberia, the situation remained fragile. In July, the publication of the draft version of the final report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission led to heated discussions since hardly a single politician was spared from criticism. The trial against former Liberian President Charles Taylor was continued by the Special Court for Sierra Leone in The Hague. For further information on the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) see Chapter C.

In Guinea-Bissau, the assassinations of Chief of Staff Tagme Na Wai on 1 March and President Nino Vieira on 2 March, the circumstances of which have not yet been clarified, have plunged the country into another deep crisis. The presidential elections held as a result of these events were won by Malam Bacai Sanha ahead of Kumba Yala. For further information on the CSDP Operation EU SSR Guinea-Bissau see A.VI.1.2.1. For further information on the United Nations Peace-Building Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS) see Chapter C.

In March, the violent clashes between followers of the government party and of the opposition had again demonstrated the fragility of the situation in Sierra Leone. Austria became a member of the country-specific format of the UN Peacebuilding Commission. For further information on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office on Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) see Chapter C.

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, has progressed. The joint expert groups formed to deal with the Action Plan’s individual areas started work and progress made will be evaluated in 2010.

Based on the Cotonou Agreement, the EU opened negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement with the Economic Community Of West African States (ECOWAS). The goal is to cross-link trade and development policies to trigger reforms in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP States), promote sustainable development and contribute to fighting
poverty. In a next step, budget priorities and timetables for their implementation by ECOWAS and the linking of national and regional levels will be drafted. By launching these activities, the partners aim to enhance ECOWAS’ capability to act and enable it to evolve into a more coherent planning instrument for donors.

10.4. Regional Integration

At its meeting held in Arusha (Tanzania) on 20 November, the East African Community (EAC) agreed on establishing a common market involving four fundamental freedoms and modelled on the EU. The EAC’s long-term goals are to establish a common currency and a political federation.

A round table on the repositioning of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IC/GLR) was held in Bujumbura (Burundi) on 5 and 6 November. In the lead-up to this event, Austria had signalled its readiness in principle to support the IC/GLR Secretariat.

In the SADC, the DR of the Congo took over the one-year chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. Implementing the framework agreement signed in 2008 with Austria, first bilateral consultations were held in December.

11. Asia

11.1. General Developments

The importance of Asia has further increased, also against the background of the economic and financial crisis, which the Asian countries succeeded in managing much better than others. Asia has evolved into the most dynamic region in the world. Due to their economic and political weight, the Asian states hold an international responsibility that has made them indispensable players in managing the challenges facing today’s world. In this context, Asia is a decisive partner in reaching the climate goals.

11.1.1. North-East Asia

The primary foreign policy focus pursued by the People’s Republic of China is on maintaining and/or re-establishing national unity as well as safeguarding the process of Chinese modernisation and transformation on an external level. The Chinese approach in this context is based on a multi-polar world. China sees itself as the leading representative of developing countries. With its permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, China is permanently involved in decision-making processes relating to issues of international security. An essential element and driver of Chinese foreign policy is securing the country’s supply of scarce raw materials and sources of energy.
Diplomatic relations between the EU and China have been in place since 1975. Negotiations on a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement were opened in 2007 and are still ongoing. The 11th EU-China Summit – which China had cancelled last year – was rescheduled, held in Prague and followed by a further summit meeting in Nanjing at the end of November. For China, the EU is the largest trading partner and investor, and China is, in turn, the European Union’s second largest trading partner after the USA. The EU’s balance of trade deficit vis-à-vis China is still very high but has fallen slightly as a result of declining Chinese exports, generally attributed to the economic and financial crisis in Europe. Trade and economic policy issues, such as the undervaluation of the Chinese renminbi (yuan), figure prominently on the agenda of the EU-China Dialogue. The execution of the British national Akmal Shaik (the first European to be executed in China since the 1950s) as well as the sentencing of the well-known author Liu Xiaobo to eleven years of imprisonment for “incitement to subversion of state power” overshadowed the human rights dialogue.

The year 2009 has seen a détente in relations with Taiwan. Since the Kuomintang assumed government responsibility in 2008, Taiwan has increased the daily quota of mainland visitors tenfold to 3,000, and the number of direct flights to 270 per week. Under the name of Chinese Taipei, Taiwan was granted observer status at the WHO’s World Health Assembly in May. This was the first time that the People’s Republic has agreed to the island’s participation in a United Nations body.

The alliance with the USA remains the cornerstone of Japan’s security policy. The deployment of Japanese tanker vessels in the Indian Ocean to support the ships of states participating in the pacification of Afghanistan was discontinued at the beginning of 2010. To compensate for this move, Japan committed itself to support Afghanistan and Pakistan financially, pledging the substantial sum of five billion US dollars over a period of three years. The priorities pursued by Japanese foreign policy include strengthening the country’s position in the Asian region, deepening bilateral relations to China and the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. The new government is also interested in the development of a multilateral institutional structure in the East-Asian region.

In the interests of security policy stability on the Korean peninsula, the Republic of Korea focused its foreign policy activities mainly on the USA, China and Japan as the decisive regional powers in this regard. At the same time, the government led by President Lee Myung-bak increased its diplomatic offensive with regard to other regions of the world. In this context, the country combined promotion of its economic interests with the requirement to raise the country’s international standing. The North Korean missile and nuclear tests led to renewed tensions in inter-Korean relations; Seoul subsequently undertook efforts towards convincing North Korea to rejoin the six-
party talks. However, inter-Korean dialogue remained limited to occasional contact talks.

No progress was achieved in the quest for a solution to the nuclear crisis involving the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. In response to condemnation of its missile launch in April by the United Nations Security Council, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea announced its withdrawal from the six-party talks (with China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the USA) and the further development of its nuclear capabilities. In May, the country announced that it would be conducting a second underground nuclear test. In response to this announcement, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 1874 on 12 June which tightened existing sanctions. During visits paid to Pyongyang by Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao in October and US Special Envoy Stephen Bosworth in December, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea demonstrated readiness to resume – subject to certain conditions – bi- and multilateral consultations. At domestic policy level, the devaluation of the won by the regime led to social discontent.

After years of sound growth, Mongolia slid into a recession. The economy is, however, expected to recover as exports of raw materials are increasing. The new Prime Minister, Sukhbaatar Batbold, strives to integrate his country more effectively into the international financial markets with a view to increasing profits gained from exploitation of the country’s raw materials and use them more strategically. Contacts with the EU, which Mongolia views as its “third neighbour” (after China and Russia) were intensified.

11.1.2. Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan has not stabilised. Although supported by the international community, the government in Kabul did not succeed in achieving any substantial success against the fundamentalist Taliban. The massive joint operation by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan National Army did not prove strong enough to break the Taliban’s resistance. On the contrary, the number of attacks increased substantially, also in the capital Kabul – making the year 2009 the bloodiest since 2001. In the light of these challenges, US President Barack Obama ordered an increase in numbers of US troops in Afghanistan by 30,000 soldiers. Other states announced they would also raise their troop numbers. On 20 August, presidential elections were held – the first to be organised and conducted by the Afghans themselves – still with some international support. The elections took place in an atmosphere marked by serious security problems and were overshadowed by massive irregularities. After several thousands of votes had been declared invalid by the election complaints commission and a run-off election announced, Abdullah Abdullah, the strongest challenger of the incumbent who came second, announced his withdrawal. On 19 November, the incumbent President Hamid Karzai was sworn in officially for his second term in office.
11.1.3. South and South East Asia

The largest challenge posed to **Pakistan** is the threat by fundamentalist extremism. In the first half of the year, the radical extremists for the first time succeeded in also bringing an area in the heart of the country (the Swat district and its surroundings) fully under their control. The government responded with large-scale military action and succeeded in regaining control of Swat in August. In November, the armed forces occupied the tribal region of South-Waziristan. Reacting to this, in autumn the radical fundamentalists conducted a series of bloody terrorist attacks throughout the country, largely executed by suicide bombers. They mainly chose large cities as their targets, including the country’s capital Islamabad. The fight against terrorism also used up the major part of available resources, making it impossible for the government to focus on the considerable economic and social problems facing the country. On the domestic front, the year was marked by severe tensions between government and the opposition on revoking measures introduced by previous President General Pervez Musharraf. Under massive pressure from the opposition, the Supreme Court judges dismissed by Pervez Musharraf in March were reinstalled and in November the government decided not to extend an amnesty law which had been introduced by Pervez Musharraf. On 17 June, the first EU-Pakistan summit was held in Brussels.

The process of detente between **India** and **Pakistan**, whose relations have been severely strained over decades by the Kashmir issue, suffered from the terrorist attacks Islamist groups were launching against Indian targets and came to a standstill following the attack on the financial metropolis of Mumbai at the end of November 2008. India accused Pakistan of tolerating Islamist terrorist organisations, like the Lakshar-e-Toiba, which are made responsible for the majority of attacks in India, on Pakistani territory and claimed that the country was not cracking down resolutely enough on those behind the attacks. Despite highest-level meetings being held on the margins of international summits (SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, summit of the Non-Aligned States in Sharm El Sheikh) a resumption of dialogue was not possible.

Strategic rapprochement with the USA and re-entry into the civilian nuclear trade were priorities on the **Indian foreign policy** agenda. The initial concern about a potential paradigm shift under the new Obama administration from the explicitly pro-Indian foreign policy of George W. Bush was replaced by cautiously optimistic expectations particularly in the joint struggle against terrorism and with respect to civilian nuclear cooperation. The Strategic Partnership with the EU was confirmed at the 10th EU–India Summit on 6 November in New Delhi. The main topics dealt with were climate change and energy, terrorism, reform of the global financial system, the Doha Round, food security, international security, disarmament as well as trade and investment. As a regional superpower in South Asia, India – which is increasingly
competing with China in this endeavour – is striving to act as stabiliser for its crisis-shaken neighbours Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

In Bangladesh, the left-wing Awami League, led by Sheikh Hasina, and its coalition partners took over government affairs in January. The new government started to take action against corruption and to clarify war crimes committed during and after the war of independence against Pakistan at the beginning of the 1970s. In contrast to its Islamic-nationalist oriented predecessor, the Hasina government takes a clearly pro-Indian stance.

In the kingdom of Bhutan, the King’s government programme directed at “Gross National Happiness” was continued. In foreign policy matters, the country takes its lead particularly from India, which is Bhutan’s most important partner, especially in the field of hydropower.

In Nepal, the atmosphere became tense again in spring. The government led by former Maoist partisan Pushpa Kamal Dahal “Prachanda” – the first government since monarchy was abolished in spring 2008 – resigned because of coalition disputes in May and government affairs were taken over by the National Congress led by Madhav Kumar Nepal. Since then Maoists have boycotted the new government’s work by organising strikes and protest campaigns throughout the country, which had a negative impact on peace efforts and the constituent process.

After the government of Sri Lanka had achieved military victory over the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in May, the country was faced with a two-fold challenge. On the one hand, the difficult humanitarian situation of the initially more than 250,000 internally displaced Tamil refugees, which was subject to criticism by international observers, had to be improved – and on the other hand, a political solution had to be sought for the decades-old conflict between the Tamil minority and the Singhalese majority population.

On the Maldives, new President Mohammed Nasheed, who succeeded 30 years of sole rule by former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, strove to promote the democratic opening of the Moslem island state, fight against corruption and clarify human rights violations committed in the past.

The domestic situation in Thailand remained tense. The sometimes violent protests against the government of Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva continued and culminated in the storming of the ASEAN Summit in Pattaya by government opponents (“red shirts”), which had to be broken off. The country’s society remains divided by a deep chasm between followers of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his opponents. The major political challenges facing Thailand’s government continued to include the problems in the three southern provinces with Muslim majority populations. Although some progress was made, it has not yet been possible to disrupt the spiral of violence on the ground. The government’s working programme also focused on countering the negative impact of the financial and economic
In the war crimes tribunal, set up jointly by the United Nations and Cambodia to prosecute the crimes committed by the Red Khmer, the main trial began against the former head of the infamous Tuol Sleng prison, Kang Kek Iew alias Kaing Guek Eav or Duch. Tensions between Cambodia and Thailand continued to deteriorate when Cambodia’s government appointed Thailand’s former Head of Government Thaksin Shinawatra as economic advisor.

The domestic policy situation in Myanmar has not improved. In May, charges were brought against opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for violation of the terms of her house arrest after an American national had illegally gained access to her house. She was sentenced to a further 18 months of house arrest, which deprived her of any opportunity to become politically active before the 2010 elections. The human rights situation in Myanmar is still shocking. Human rights violations are ongoing, particularly forced labour, torture and abuse of child soldiers. In particular ethnic minorities are being systematically persecuted, abused and maltreated. After the US strategy towards Myanmar was revised with a view to enhancing dialogue, several high-level US politicians visited Myanmar. At the same time the country’s government started to signal its interest in holding talks with the international community.

In Malaysia, the governing coalition Barisan Nasional led by Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak worked intensively on regaining ground following the painful loss of its two thirds majority. A stimulus package was put together to counter the economic crisis. In the fourth quarter, the country’s economy registered the first growth since the onset of the crisis, generating about 4 per cent.

Since the end of the authoritarian regime of long-term President General Suharto in 1998, Indonesia has succeeded in strengthening and further consolidating democracy. Particularly in the field of the freedom of the media, the country has developed into a role model for the entire region. The parliamentary and presidential elections held in the country with a population of 235 million inhabitants were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere. Incumbent President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono won a clear majority and was confirmed in office in July. After the EU had in July partially lifted its ban on Indonesian airlines flying to Europe, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the EU and Indonesia, which had already been fully negotiated in 2007, was eventually signed on 9 November.

The situation in Timor-Leste has improved thanks to the United Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT), dispatched in 2006, and the “international peacekeepers”. It was largely possible to close down the camps for internally displaced people.
The domestic situation in the Philippines was mainly dominated by the positioning of the individual candidates and groups for the elections to all important offices (presidential, parliamentary, regional and local elections) scheduled for 10 May 2010. In the lengthy peace process between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Malaysia mediated talks that were opened in Kuala Lumpur on 8 December.

Despite the global economic crisis, the developments in Vietnam were largely positive and the country registered growth of more than 5 per cent. At the end of the year, the World Bank and the donor community stated that after 20 years of economic growth and major success in fighting poverty, Vietnam was now on the threshold of middle income country status. The country continued its tough course taken against dissidents. The case attracting most attention in this connection was the arrest of the well-known lawyer Le Cong Dinh on 13 June on the charges of “spreading propaganda” and attempts at “overthrowing the people’s administration”. In October, nine democracy activists were sentenced to imprisonment.

11.2. The EU-Asia Partnership

The process of Asia-Europe meetings (ASEM) plays an increasingly important role as a dialogue forum between the EU and Asia. On 25 and 26 May, the 9th ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Hanoi. The main topics discussed were ASEM enlargement (Australia, Russia), Myanmar, North Korea as well as the global financial and economic crisis.

The Singapore-based Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) is the only permanent institution under ASEM and aims to promote cultural and scientific relations between the ASEM states.

The EU contributes actively 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 2008, 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. The Charter also contains the ASEAN Member States’ commitment to the rule of law, democracy and good governance. The ASEAN Member States have Permanent Representatives accredited with the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta who meet for regular deliberations (Committee of Permanent Representatives). On 5 June, the Austrian Ambassador to Indonesia handed over his letter of accreditation as Austrian Representative to ASEAN.
The European Union’s External Relations

In 2009, Thailand held the rotating chair of ASEAN to be followed by Vietnam in 2010.

The 17th ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting was held in Phnom Penh on 27 and 28 May. At this event, both sides signed a declaration on the EU’s accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC). The EU’s accession will require an adaptation to the Treaty.

As provided in the ASEAN Charter, the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) was established at the 15th ASEAN Summit held in Cha-Am/Hua Hin (Thailand) from 23 to 25 October. The Commission is however, not equipped with the necessary powers to prosecute human rights violations.

As a result of the close economic relations between many ASEAN Member States and China, Japan as well as the Republic of Korea, further levels of integration, such as ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS), have developed in parallel.

12. Australia New Zealand, Oceania

12.1. Australia

Australia’s foreign policy priorities remained unchanged and included cooperation with the USA, a proactive multilateral role (particularly under the UN), the fight against terrorism, and intensification of its relations in the Asian-Pacific region. In May, the Australian government defined the country’s future defence principles in a Defence White Paper, involving plans to substantially increase and strengthen the Australian armed forces by 2030. Australia continues to be strongly engaged in its neighbourhood (India, East Timor, Pacific island states) as the country strives to promote political and economic stability in this region. The issue of climate change still ranks high on Australia’s agenda, although the tone of domestic discussions on the introduction of an emissions trading system has changed. The EU-Australia Partnership Framework has proved successful as an instrument for adding new momentum to shaping mutual relations.

12.2. New Zealand

The new government headed by Prime Minister John Key, in office since November 2008, continues to pursue New Zealand’s traditional foreign policy priorities including proactive 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. Special importance is attached to – particularly economic – exchange with the Asian region. From New Zealand’s point of view, the Free Trade Agreement concluded with China in 2008 has therefore proved
its worth. Efforts aimed at intensifying the relationship with the USA were continued successfully.

12.3. Oceania

All Pacific island states belong to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP States). Second to Australia, the EU is the largest donor of development assistance in the Pacific region. Under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), strategy papers were signed with 13 South-Pacific states. For the period from 2008 to 2012, the EU has earmarked a total of 452 million euros for cooperation projects to be implemented in the region. The projects focus on good governance, containing the impacts of sea level rise, sustainable farming, natural resources, energy supply and healthcare projects.

Austria has intensified its relations with the Pacific states. The Vienna Diplomatic Academy, for instance, organised a seminar for university graduates from the Pacific island states dealing with “Pacific Island States and the European Union” that was held in Vienna from 18 May to 5 June.

Regional cooperation continued to develop positively. The dominant political issue for the region is returning Fiji to democracy. The situation in Fiji also figured prominently on the agenda of the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) that met in Cairns on 5 and 6 August, and also focused on climate change and coordination of development cooperation. The Australia-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

At the Summit held in Straßburg and Kehl on 3 and 4 April, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) adopted a “Declaration on Alliance Security“ that defines the guidelines for the Organisation’s New Strategic Concept (the last such concept dating from 1999), which is to be completed by 2010. In preparing the New Strategic Concept, NATO attaches the utmost importance to also involving its partners and as such Austria participates actively in the deliberations.

In August, the Danish politician Anders Fogh Rasmussen assumed the office of NATO Secretary General.

With respect to expansion, NATO continues to pursue its “open door policy“. In April, NATO officially welcomed its two new members Albania and Croatia, and it is to be expected that Macedonia will join as soon as the dispute over its official name has been resolved with Greece. Montenegro as well as Bosnia und Herzegovina applied to join the Membership Action Plan (MAP). In December, NATO foreign ministers agreed to accept Montenegro in the MAP, while so far no consensus has been reached on the accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, Georgia, to which NATO had already offered the prospect of future membership (without, however, defining a specific timeframe) at its 2008 Summit in Bucharest, also expressed interest in joining the MAP. Currently, the most important forum for the intensification of relations between Georgia and NATO is the NATO-Georgia Commission, which was set up following the Russian-Georgian conflict in 2008.

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

In 2009, Austria continued to provide the largest contingent of any partner country within the Kosovo Force (KFOR), at times deploying more than 600 soldiers. Under this operation, Austria was in command of the Multinational Task Force South (MTF S) until the end of May. Furthermore, Austria also seconded staff officers to the headquarters of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, ISAF.

In connection with the Partnership for Peace (PfP), Austria also participated in the following Trust Fund Projects in 2009: destruction of small arms and light weapons as well as munitions in Ukraine; destruction of small arms and
light weapons in Kazakhstan; destruction of explosive remnants of war in Jordan; development of alternative livelihoods for downsized personnel in the Serbian defence sector; effective transition of former members of the Kosovo Protection Corps into viable civilian occupations; preparation of training programmes to promote the fight against corruption in the defence sector.

In the discussions on NATO’s New Strategic Concept, Austria’s contributions focused particularly on the “comprehensive approach”, i.e. the development of comprehensive approaches for managing crises and conflicts. Austria also drafted a working paper on this issue, stressing that in its view issues like gender mainstreaming, the protection of civilians or the socio-economic aspects of peace missions in operational areas played an important role in this context. Austria also participated in the Swiss-led process for drafting a working paper dealing with the role of the Euro-Atlantic Partnership (EAP) and its upgrading.

2. Debate about the Future European Security Architecture

In a speech he delivered in Berlin on 5 June 2008, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev presented a proposal for a new European Security Treaty. Reacting to the proposals suggested by Medvedev, the OSCE foreign ministers launched the Corfu Process, aimed at a comprehensive, cross-dimensional discussion of the European security agenda within the OSCE, at their informal meeting held on the Greek island on 27 and 28 June. Together with its EU partners, Austria fully supports this dialogue process and actively worked towards promoting it by organising several events to this end in 2009. Thus Austria, for instance, funded two informal rounds of discussions of OSCE ambassadors in Stegersbach in April and in Krems in October and hosted a meeting of leading experts on this topic in Vienna on 8 May.

Russia presented a concrete draft for a new “European Security Treaty” in November, which focuses primarily on politico-military security aspects (“hard security”) and largely refrains from addressing issues like human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The underlying principle of the draft treaty is the “indivisible, equal and undiminished security” of all Parties to the Treaty. In this spirit, any security measures taken by any Party to the Treaty shall be implemented with due regard to the security interests of all other Parties.

According to the draft, the treaty shall be open for signature by all states of the Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space “from Vancouver to Vladivostok” as well as by international organisations like the EU, the OSCE, NATO or the Community of Independent States and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). Accession by non-European states would also be possible under the draft which does not provide for the OSCE to play a special role among these organisations.
Austria still advocates an open debate about the issues addressed by Russia, albeit without giving any rise to doubts as to the fact that it regards the OSCE and the Corfu Process as the central forum for all activities towards strengthening Euro-Atlantic security – as they form the ideal framework for a comprehensive consideration of all security-relevant issues ranging from the areas of business to democracy and human rights. From the Austrian and European point of view, however, it would be premature to commit at the current point in time to a treaty in a form which is binding under international law; existing arrangements and instruments first need to be strengthened and improved.

3. Debate on US Missile Defence Bases in Europe

In 2008, the issue of potential US missile defence bases in Europe had still been the subject of an ongoing lively debate that led to differences of opinion between the USA and Russia. Following the accession to office of the new US President, the discussion, however, took a completely new turn in 2009. In mid-September, the USA decided to refrain for the time being from deploying missile defence facilities in the Czech Republic and Poland. The USA’s decision to focus its relevant efforts on a sea-based mobile system rather than deploying missile defence bases in the Czech Republic and Poland was particularly welcomed by Russia.

II. Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

1. Debate on the Future of Security in Europe

In response to President Dmitry Medvedev’s proposals on the elaboration of a comprehensive legally binding security treaty for Europe and the subsequent international reactions, the OSCE Chair (Greece) succeeded in firmly embedding the debate on the “future of security in Europe” within the OSCE by launching the comprehensive cross-dimensional Corfu Process at the OSCE foreign ministers’ informal meeting held in Corfu from 27 to 28 June. The 17th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens adopted a political declaration to reconfirm, review and reinvigorate security and cooperation from Vancouver to Vladivostok as well as a separate declaration on substance and modalities of the continuation of the Corfu Process. While the Russian Federation holds the view that there is, above all, a need for action in matters concerning the politico-military dimension and sees the Corfu Process primarily as a supplement to the Russian draft for a security treaty, the Western participating States call for consideration of all three dimensions and placing of a special focus on implementing existing OSCE commitments. The Western participating States indicate their openness to discuss – however, not to negotiate – the Russian draft treaty within the Corfu Process.
2. Athens Ministerial Council / Regional Issues and Field Activities

The adoption of 21 documents, especially a declaration and a decision on the European Security Dialogue (the last such political declaration dating from 2002) made the 17th OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens on 1 and 2 December one of the most successful OSCE meetings in years.

The central topic on the Ministerial Council’s agenda was the Corfu Process, on which the Declaration “Reconfirm – Review – Reinvigorate Security and Co-operation from Vancouver to Vladivostok” as well as a separate decision on further procedure under 2010 Kazakh Chairmanship were adopted. Although a comprehensive political declaration (“Athens Declaration”) did, as in previous years, not materialise (the main reason being the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe), agreement among participating States was almost within reach. With regard to unresolved conflicts, a regional declaration was adopted on Nagorno-Karabakh (as in 2008) but not on Georgia and Transnistria.

At the end of the year, the Permanent Council agreed to extend all OSCE mission mandates. 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 decision on the continuation of an OSCE Office in Zagreb was also adopted at the end of December. On 1 January 2010 Kazakhstan will take over the OSCE Chairmanship.

The OSCE maintains 18 field operations in South Eastern Europe and the CIS, to which the major portion of the OSCE budget (75 per cent) and human resources are devoted. Austria seconded 32 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 focused on those countries with the most urgent need of assistance in consolidating democratic structures, human rights and the rule of law. In specific cases, Austria also funded projects involving a politico-military, economic or environmental dimension. Austria’s special expertise in carrying out operations in high mountain areas is in high demand in the field of border management. In this context, funding and human resources are made available to projects in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan which are directly related to the international stabilisation efforts in Afghanistan.

2.1. 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 2010.

The OSCE’s field operations represent an important contribution towards establishing rule of law and democratic structures as well as the development and consolidation of multi-ethnic societies in South Eastern Europe. In some areas, the role of the OSCE has shifted towards increased monitoring and 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. Moldova/Transnistria

The simmering conflict in Transnistria still remains unresolved. Since the end of 2006, Moldova has focused its efforts on bilateral talks with Russia. The internationally recognised “5+2 format” (MD-TN/OSCE/RF/UKR as facilitators as well as the EU and the USA as observers) convened for talks in Vienna from 21 to 22 June, on 6 October and most recently on 6 November. In June, a seminar on the topic of “confidence- and security-building measures in Moldova”, organised jointly by the Greek OSCE Chairmanship and the OSCE Mission to Moldova, was held in Mauerbach (Austria).

The main goal pursued by the OSCE Mission to Moldova is to facilitate the achievement of a lasting, comprehensive political settlement of the Transnistrian conflict. The Mission focuses on human rights issues, democratisation, freedom of the media, combating human trafficking and implementing confidence-building measures.

2.3. Belarus

The OSCE Office in Minsk is active in all three dimensions and focuses especially on implementing projects aimed at developing environmental and economic activities, consolidating the rule of law, building democratic institutions and promoting civil society. In the economic and environmental dimension, the focus of activities was on continuing projects fostering the development of areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster and energy security, while activities in the human dimension focused on fighting human trafficking.

2.4. Southern Caucasus

The OSCE Mission in Georgia, the largest OSCE field operation mission outside of South Eastern Europe, was engaged in finding a political solution to the conflicts involving the two separatist regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the latter efforts being under the aegis of the UN. Due to lack of agreement on a status-neutral proposal by the Chairmanship, the OSCE Mission in Georgia was terminated as of 31 December 2008. By the end of June,
when the separate mandate of the OSCE Military Observer Mission (involving 20 military observers including one Austrian officer) expired, it was necessary to gradually reduce and eventually end ongoing projects. In parallel, the OSCE Chairmanship undertook efforts aimed at maintaining an OSCE presence. The vast majority of states continued to call for a substantial and cross-dimensional role to be played by the OSCE in Georgia. The Russian Federation insisted on the elaboration of a revised mandate taking account of its unilateral recognition of both Abkhazia's and South Ossetia’s independence, which was, however, unacceptable for the vast majority of OSCE participating States. As co-chair of the Geneva talks, the OSCE continues to work actively towards building and increasing mutual confidence between the parties to the conflict.

The **OSCE Offices in Yerevan and Baku** support 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. Problems relating particularly to lack of freedom of the media in Azerbaijan were the topic of frequent deliberations in the Permanent Council.

A resolution to the **Nagorno-Karabakh conflict** is sought under the Minsk Group, which is co-chaired by the USA, France and the Russian Federation. 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 operation. Since March, the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group have noted improvement in the security situation along the ceasefire line. Several meetings involving the presidents and foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan were held and the willingness to reach a peaceful solution confirmed, as also reiterated in a political declaration on Nagorno-Karabakh issued at the Athens OSCE Ministerial Council.

### 2.5. 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. The Project Coordinator’s Office is active in all three OSCE dimensions cooperating with both the Ukrainian authorities and NGOs.

### 2.6. Central Asia

The OSCE is one of the most important international players in the countries of Central Asia. The OSCE field missions focus on the one hand on
supporting 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 (especially the OSCE Academy in Bishkek). Furthermore, the comprehensive police reform programme, conducted by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), is proving successful. Another aspect of this field mission’s scope that is increasingly developing into a priority area of activity is border management, and particularly the building up of the respective local capacities.

The focus of the OSCE’s activities in Tajikistan also remains on systematically developing effective border management structures at the country’s border with Afghanistan.

Whilst in Uzbekistan cooperation between the OSCE and the Uzbek authorities remained difficult and very limited, Turkmenistan displayed an enhanced will for cooperation. 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 assist in 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. Its operational institution is the Warsaw-based Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

ODIHR’s scope covers the promotion of democratic elections, building-up of democratic structures, human rights, tolerance, non-discrimination and the rule of law. The Office plays a leading, internationally-recognised role in the field of election observation. It organised election observation missions to national elections in 17 participating States, including not only the “new democracies” but also in 15 EU Member States, including Austria, during the European elections. However, the latter election mission was an Election Exploratory Mission, during which a small group of experts explored the election’s legal and organisational environment without observing the events on the actual election day. Austria participated in ODIHR election observation missions by seconding a total of 33 short-term observers and six long-term observers to Albania, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia and Moldova as well as three further long-term observers to Ukraine in preparation for the presidential elections in 2010.

One of 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 27 September to 8 October. The three annual OSCE Human Dimension Supplementary Meetings held in Vienna were each dedicated to a specific topic: Hate Crimes – Effective Implementation of Legislation (4 and 5 May), Freedom of Religion or Belief (9 and 10 July), Gender Equality with a Special Focus on Violence against Women (5 and 6 November). The Human Dimension Seminar, which is also held annually, dealt with the Rule of Law (Warsaw, 12 to 14 May).

In January, the Chairman-in-Office appointed three new Personal Representatives mandated with continuing the implementation of OSCE activities in the various areas pertaining to tolerance: Rabbi Andrew Baker (USA, Personal Representative on Combating Anti-Semitism), Vyacheslav Gizzatov (Kazakhstan, Personal Representative on Combating Intolerance and Discrimination against Muslims) and Mario Mauro (Italy, Personal Representative on Combating Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination, also focusing on Intolerance and Discrimination against Christians and Members of other Religions). The Special Representative for Combating Human Trafficking, Eva Biaudet, in office since 2006, organised a number of expert conferences in Vienna. In office since 2007, former Norwegian Foreign Minister Knut Vollebaek continued his activities as High Commissioner for National Minorities 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 participating States and 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 Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Georgia conflict. Furthermore, numerous proposals on improving the implementation of the 1999 Vienna Document on Confidence and Security Building Measures were discussed. The Annual Security Review Conference, held in Vienna on 23 and 24 June, was also attended by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

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 with respect to the preparation of OSCE Best Practice Guides on SALW and on Procedures for Management of Stockpiles of Conventional Ammunition, in the context of which increased attention was dedicated to improving safe
storage of conventional stockpile ammunition. Furthermore, following up on the decision to continue dealing with the topic of Cyber Security in a comprehensive manner, an expert meeting, co-funded by Austria, was organised in March. The Athens Ministerial Council adopted two Ministerial Declarations (on the 65th Anniversary of the End of World War II and on Non-Proliferation). Decisions of the Ministerial Council were adopted on the FSC priorities, small arms and light weapons and conventional ammunition.

Discussions increasingly focused on non-military aspects of security. Terrorism, organised crime, trafficking in drugs and human beings as well as money laundering were defined as real new threats and addressed by a special Security Committee. The Athens Ministerial Council adopted decisions on measures to support and promote the international legal framework against terrorism, on further efforts to address transnational threats and challenges to security and stability and on security of travel documents. A decision on the further improvement of OSCE police activities, which provides for the preparation of a strategic action plan by 2011, was taken at ambassador level.

5. The OSCE’s Economic and Environmental Dimension

The OSCE’s economic and environmental dimension was dominated by the topic of “Migration management and its linkages with economic, social and environmental policies to the benefit of stability and security in the OSCE region”, chosen by the Greek Chairmanship for the 2009 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 Athens in May. The priority topic proposed by Kazakhstan, which will hold next year’s Chairmanship, for the 2010 Economic Forum deals with transport under the heading of “Promoting good governance at border crossings, improving the security of land transportation and facilitating international transport by road and rail in the OSCE region”.

6. Headquarters

The office facilities of the OSCE’s new headquarters in Vienna’s Wallnerstrasse, which were handed over in November 2007, are highly appreciated by both the OSCE Secretariat and the OSCE institutions accommodated there.

7. 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. At the 18th Annual Session held in Kiew from 29 June to 3 July, João Soares from Portugal was re-elected Presi-
dent of the Parliamentary Assembly. Austrian Member of the Lower House of Parliament (National Council) Wolfgang Gossruck is one of the nine Vice-Presidents of the Assembly. The Parliamentary Assembly’s Winter Meeting, which has been held in Vienna every year since 2002, took place on 19 and 20 February.

III. Council of Europe

1. Political Developments

Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is one of the oldest regional organisations in Europe. The 60th anniversary was celebrated in 2009 inter alia with a ceremonial act in October in which former President Mikhail Gorbachev, President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso, Slovenian President Danilo Türk, Swedish Minister for EU Affairs Cecilia Malmström and the new Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjørn Jagland stressed the important role the Council of Europe plays in European integration. The anniversary of the Council of Europe’s foundation was also a major topic at its Committee of Ministers meeting in Madrid on 12 May. At the same time, the decisions taken in Madrid towards reducing the burden on the European Court of Human Rights marked a successful step towards further improving the protection of human rights (see G.V.)

The Action Plan for the Implementation of the Warsaw Declaration adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the Council of Europe held in 2005 continues to form the current basis for the activities of the Council of Europe. The Action Plan focuses the Council of Europe’s activities on its core tasks of supporting democracy, human rights and rule of law. In 2009, the following concrete activities were launched with a view to implementing the goals set out in the Warsaw Declaration:

• Children’s rights remained a focus of special attention also under the Spanish Chairmanship. With a view to implementing the strategy “Building a Europe for and with Children”, adopted in 2009, an expert group on child-friendly justice was set up. In March, a conference on “the Protection of Children in European Justice Systems” was held in Toledo and in April an experts meeting convened in Madrid dealing with “Health in a Europe for and with Children”.

• Against the background of the global economic crisis, the first conference of ministers responsible for social cohesion met in Moscow on 26 and 27 February to consider “Investing in social cohesion – investing in stability and the well-being of society”. The conference focused on strengthening the political commitment for access of all – including the weakest groups in society – to social rights in order to promote social stability and welfare.

• Also in February, a high-level meeting was held in Léon to promote the rights of people with disabilities and dealing in particular with “women
and disabilities: access to training and employment”. In this context, the focus was on the implementation of the Council of Europe Disability Action Plan and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- The First Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Media and New Communication Services, held in Reykjavik on 28 and 29 May, was dedicated to the challenges facing the Council of Europe in the field of new media, including managing and regulating the Internet, data protection and the fight against cybercrime. The Council of Europe will play a substantial role in defining the direction which management of these challenges will take in the future.

- The Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Family Affairs, chaired by State Secretary Christine Marek, convened in Vienna on 16 and 17 June. At this conference, which was opened by Federal President Heinz Fischer, more than 200 participants, including nine ministers and 15 state secretaries, discussed the manifold reasons for the relatively low birth rates compared to the desire to have children and considered measures aimed at more family-friendly policies.

- The 29th Conference of Ministers of Justice also took place in June and dealt with fighting domestic violence. Furthermore, the Council of Europe Convention on Access to Official Documents was opened for signature and signed by twelve Member States.

- At the Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government, held in Utrecht on 16 and 17 November, the Utrecht Declaration was adopted, stressing the responsibility held particularly by local and regional authorities in connection with managing the financial crisis.

2. Relationship with other International Organisations

Relations between the Council of Europe and the EU are guided by the Memorandum of Understanding, which was signed between the two organisations in 2007 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 also confirmed the role of the Council of Europe as reference for democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Close cooperation between the Council of Europe and the EU was also further intensified and information on current activities and ongoing projects is 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. EU representatives attend meetings held by the Council of Europe, the EU maintains a representation in Strasbourg and a representative of the European Commission also attends Council of Ministers meetings. A special priority are
the jointly prepared and funded programmes for South Eastern and Eastern European countries, which provide for an enhanced promotion of law, rule of law and democracy. A total of 52 joint projects have been implemented – 20 per cent of the Council of Europe’s programme activities. In providing over 50 per cent of the funding for Council of Europe projects, the EU is the largest voluntary contributor by far. The so-called quadrilateral meetings at political level, involving the Chairmanship and the Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, the EU Presidency and a high-level representative of the European Commission were held in May and October. Upon entry into force, Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights Convention (ECHR) opens up the way for the European Union’s accession to the ECHR – an objective Austria has long been supporting. The legal basis for this step was created by the entry into effect of the Treaty of Lisbon. In this context, cooperation with the Vienna-based EU Agency for Fundamental Rights plays a pivotal role. Both institutions keep each other regularly updated in advance of planned activities and act in close coordination. Under the EU’s Eastern Partnership, which forms part of the Union’s European Neighbourhood Policy, the Council of Europe participates in two of the four platforms (Democracy, Rule of Law and Stability as well as Contacts between People).

Cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE generally takes place within the institutional context of the 2+2 meetings between the Chairpersons and Secretary Generals of both organisations, as well as in various working groups. In 2009, cooperation between the Council of Europe and the OSCE was continued under the Human Dimension Implementation Meeting and the Co-ordination Group. The four central areas of cooperation involve 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. On 3 June, the annual High-level Tripartite-Plus Meeting involving representatives of all three organisations (Council of Europe, UN and OSCE) as well as further international organisations was held in Geneva and dealt with “preventing conflicts through the strengthening of democratic institutions”. The consultations underlined the important role played by free and fair elections in promoting freedom and security and referred to the need for building consensus at all levels and involving all social groups.

### 3. Human Rights

See G.V.

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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 as well as freedom of expression and information is one of the organisation’s most important instruments.

The Monitoring Committee of the Parliamentary Assembly dealt with eleven states (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Russian Federation, Serbia and Ukraine) and also undertook on-site fact-finding missions. With three further countries, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Turkey, the Committee is engaged in a post-monitoring dialogue aimed at strengthening their democratic institutions. At its Autumn Session, the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously decided to terminate the monitoring process for Monaco and launch the post-monitoring dialogue. Furthermore, the Committee prepares country reports and recommendations on a biennial basis, which are adopted by the plenary of the Parliamentary Assembly.

Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers can be based either on obligations arising from the accession procedure (as in the case of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) or on obligations arising from specific difficulties faced by the respective Member State following its accession (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine). Thematic monitoring is also carried out. All monitoring processes are confidential processes that extend over a longer period of time. The post-accession monitoring of Serbia was terminated in June as the country had fulfilled practically all formal and quantifiable obligations.

Monitoring by the Committee of Ministers of the national implementation of the judgements passed by the European Court for Human Rights is based on Article 46 of the European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocol No. 11 and takes place in four annual meetings.

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 developments in the respective countries on an almost monthly basis. The Council of Europe’s activities also focus on the impact of the conflict that broke out between Georgia and Russia in August 2008. In such a context, the Council of Europe particularly strives to contribute to improving the human rights situation in all areas affected. These efforts also involve the activities of the Human Rights Commissioner, the Committee against Torture and dedicated relief projects for traumatised children.
Specific Monitoring is undertaken on a multitude of issues. Thus 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 to ensure that countries comply with Council of Europe anti-corruption standards. In the period under review, membership of GRECO, which is also open to non-member States of the Council of Europe, comprised 46 states including Austria. The monitoring mechanism of the 2008 Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), met for the first time at the beginning of this year. In 2009, the Permanent Representative of Austria to the Council of Europe, Ambassador Thomas Hajnoczi, was elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Parties. The advisory committee of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities evaluates the national implementation of obligations under the Convention. In fulfilling its tasks, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) focuses primarily on conducting country reviews, considering relevant topics and cooperating with civil society.

5. Assistance Programmes
Alongside its activities in the fields of standard-setting and monitoring, the Council of Europe assists mainly the countries of South Eastern Europe and the Caucasus as well as Russia in implementing the objectives set out by it. The wide range of assistance programmes covers many areas from the promotion of human rights to the implementation of pluralist democracy and the rule of law, creation of awareness of a common cultural identity in all its diversity, the consolidation of democratic stability in Europe through the fostering of political, legislative and constitutional law reform, as well as the search for solutions to problems facing European society such as discrimination of minorities, drugs and organised crime. There are also a number of mainly EU funded projects which are jointly implemented and also focus on these countries and thematic priorities.

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. It is composed of the foreign ministers of the 47 Member States and/or their Permanent Representatives (Ministers’ Deputies). The chair rotates on a biannual basis and meetings at ministerial level generally take place once a year. Ministers’ Deputies convene for sessions once a week. In
these sessions, discussions are held on specific issues and decisions are taken on topics prepared by the numerous thematic committees to which representatives from the relevant Austrian ministries make proactive contributions.

6.2. Parliamentary Assembly

The Parliamentary Assembly (PA) is composed of 318 representatives and 318 substitutes from national parliaments, who have amalgamated into five parliamentary groups: the Socialist Group, the Group of the European People’s Party/Christian Democrats, the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, the European Democrat Group, and the Group of the Unified European Left. 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. The Parliamentary Assembly meets four times a year 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. The Parliamentary Assembly also carries out monitoring and election observation activities.

6.3. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe

The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe was founded in 1957 and established as a consultative body of the Council of Europe in 1994. Its 318 members meet once a year in Strasbourg. The Congress’ scope of responsibility involves formulating recommendations to the Committee of Ministers in the areas of urban and municipal democracy, environmental protection, disaster protection and social cohesion. These issues are 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 plays an important role in monitoring municipal and regional democracy and compliance with the commitments accepted upon their accession by the Member States. Furthermore, the Congress also offers projects for South Eastern Europe under the Stability Pact (focusing on the development and strengthening of democracy at local level). For the southern Mediterranean countries it offers programmes geared towards the further development of local and regional democracy. The President of the Tyrolean Diet, Herwig van Staa, is the Austrian Head of Delegation. Since 2008, Mayor Hilde Zach of Innsbruck has held the office of Vice-President of the Chamber of Local Authorities.

6.4. The Secretary General

The Secretary General is elected by the Parliamentary Assembly on recommendation by the Committee of Ministers for a term of five years and sets
the strategic course for the organisation’s work programme and budget. The Secretary General is also responsible for the Council of Europe’s Secretariat, which is made up of 16 organisational units with some 2,200 employees. Following the elections held in September, the former Norwegian Foreign Minister and Prime Minister Thorbjørn Jagland took office as new Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 1 October.

7. The Council of Europe and Austria

Austria shows a high level 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, regarding the reinforcement of Europe’s social dimension, and in the further development of the Forum for the Future of Democracy. In total, about twenty Austrians are employed at the Council of Europe, some in executive functions, including as head of a department of the Venice Commission, heads of two departments of the ECHR, head of department in the Secretariat General, department head at the Secretariat of the Congress, and head of department of the Convention against Torture.

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 named after its initiator, the former Permanent Representative of Italy to the Council of Europe, Pietro Ercole Ago), and to contributing towards reform of the ECHR. Another focus of the Representation’s activities is on providing interested Austrians with information concerning the objectives and tasks of the Council of Europe.

IV. Central European Initiative

The primary objective pursued by the Central European Initiative (CEI) is cooperation between its Central, East and South East European Member States with a view to promoting regional stability.

At this year’s annual meeting held in Bucharest on 13 November, the Heads of State adopted a declaration on the 20th anniversary of the initiative which was incepted in 1989, then known as “Quadrokanale”.

The goal was to strengthen the CEI’s traditional role as a forum for political dialogue with states that wish to move closer to the EU by increased interaction between the CEI and the European Commission. The geopolitical changes the CEI region has undergone since the founding of the Initiative – currently half of the CEI Member States are also members of the EU – required a repositioning of the Initiative in 2007. This was to be achieved
particularly by a streamlining of activities and increased cooperation with other regional organisations.

At regional level, Memoranda of Understanding adopted by the CEI-Executive Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Regional Cooperation Council and the UNESCO Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe contribute towards the objective of increased cooperation.

At the 12th Summit Economic Forum (SEF09), which was attended by 1,200 participants from 50 countries, public and private sector representatives discussed issues relating to economic development in the face of the current global economic crisis.

Further important events included meetings of the CEI Parliamentary Assembly and the 9th CEI Youth Forum which called for supporting young people’s access to the labour market.

Austria also supports the CEI in its “Know-how Exchange” programme, which was set up in 2004 with a view to promoting the exchange of knowledge between non-EU Member States and EU Member States within the CEI.

At the beginning of 2010, Ambassador Gerhard Pfanzelter (Austria) took over the function of CEI Secretary General from Ambassador Pietro Ercole Ago (Italy).

V. Neighbourhood Policy

1. Regional Partnership

The concept of the Regional Partnership (RP), set up in 2001 with the neighbouring countries Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia and “cultural neighbour” Poland, is a logical continuation of the existing close cooperation within Central Europe. In July, the Czech Republic took over the rotating informal Presidency from Slovenia and will chair the Partnership for a period of one year.

Prior to the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the Regional Partnership served to reduce potential sources of friction, support the partner countries in their accession preparations and was also used as a consultation framework for the EU’s constitutional convention and the Lisbon agenda. Since EU enlargement, it has helped to define matters of common interest and promote them within the EU. The RP has thus evolved into a network that gives relations between EU Member States a more sustainable basis, thereby providing clear benefits for both the partners and the neighbouring regions in South Eastern and Eastern Europe.

Following initiatives on the future of Kosovo and on 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.
being undertaken in 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 activities in the six working groups of the Budapest Process, the partner countries also worked on providing specific support for Serbia and the countries of former Yugoslavia on their way to Europe, as well as on further developing and strengthening consular cooperation between the representations of the Regional Partnership countries. As all the Regional Partners have belonged to the Schengen area since the end of December 2007, it has also been possible to further increase efficiency in the field of visa and consular cooperation.

The Foreign Ministers of the RP 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. At the meeting of RP foreign ministers organised by the Slovenian Presidency in Brdo (19 and 20 May), on the second day of which the foreign ministers of the Western Balkan states were invited, the commitment to further deepening cooperation among RP countries (for instance in the context of the implementation of the Treaty of Lisbon and particularly the European External Action Service) as well as supporting the Western Balkan countries on their way towards the EU was confirmed. Positive developments, like the de-blocking of the accession negotiations with Croatia, have created new momentum which must thus be used.

Cooperation between the relevant ministries was continued by the successive Presidencies of Slovenia and the Czech Republic. Within the framework of the relevant ministries, particularly the “Salzburg Forum”, under which the RP interior ministers cooperate, has undergone independent and fruitful development over the past few years. Having been set up almost at the same time as the Regional Partnership, the Salzburg Forum is composed of the six RP Member States plus Bulgaria, Romania and Croatia as observers.

The Regional Partnership will continue to look for ways of cooperating in specific areas and on specific occasions with the closely related Visegrád Group. In contrast to the latter, however, a notable feature of the RP is the fact that it manages without any institutional and administrative structures. In addition to meetings at government level, regular meetings of the Presidents of Parliaments of RP countries contribute to promoting cooperation in the region.

2. Switzerland, Liechtenstein

2.1. Switzerland

Bilateral relations are characterised by a tightly-knit set of treaties and the traditionally frequent exchange of visits. Some 60,000 Austrians reside per-
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manently in Switzerland and about 7,000 commute across the Austro-Swiss border. Both countries cooperate in several areas, inter alia in the UN, the CFSP/ESDP, the Human Security Network, development cooperation, consular matters and exchange of diplomats. The 9th Bilateral Meeting of Nuclear Experts Austria – Switzerland was held in Vienna on 4 and 5 June.

Switzerland’s relations with the EU rest on the two pillars of bilateral agreements and autonomous conformation by Switzerland. Since 29 March, Switzerland has been a full member of the Schengen system. On 8 February, the continuation and expansion of the agreement on the free movement of persons was approved by 59.6 per cent of the Swiss population. Furthermore, negotiations concerning an electricity agreement, an agriculture agreement as well as participation in various EU projects, such as Galileo, the Agency for Health, EUROJUST, Civilian Crisis Management, REACH (chemistry), emissions trading and a framework agreement were held. Moreover, an agreement on the dynamic adaptation to the EU acquis (in the field of surface transport) was concluded. Switzerland contributes 1 billion Swiss Francs over a period of five years towards reducing economic and social imbalances in the expanded EU. A dialogue concerning the adaptation of cantonal taxation/grant regimes was initiated and internal discussions were held on potential EU requests regarding the adaptation of the anti-fraud agreement concerning the exchange of information and agreement on the taxation of interest revenue.

Switzerland’s foreign policy continues to be guided primarily by its relations with the EU and large third countries, such as the USA and the BRIC states (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Special attention is also devoted to the Western Balkans. Particular weight is traditionally given to foreign trade policy and neutrality as well as global issues relating to peace and development policies. At international level, Switzerland strives to provide good offices, focusing particularly on Georgia/Russia, Cuba/USA, USA/Iran and South Sudan/Darfur.

Under the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA), Switzerland continued negotiations on free trade agreements with a number of third countries in 2009.

At a popular referendum held on 8 February, the Swiss electorate approved of the continuation of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons with the EU and of expanding the agreement’s scope to include Bulgaria and Romania. However, problems continue to exist with respect to the provision of cross-border services which are still subject to certain restrictions in Switzerland.

With respect to tax issues, Switzerland committed itself in March to adopting the new OECD standard which provides for enhanced mutual administrative assistance in tax matters. Within six months, Switzerland adapted the twelve double taxation regulations required by the OECD and the G20
to the new standards and was subsequently deleted in September from the OECD’s “grey list” of “uncooperative states”. Within the OECD, Switzerland will also work towards establishing an efficient monitoring system aimed at the worldwide implementation of international standards: for the first time Switzerland is thus represented at the Office of the OECD Fiscal Committee and at the Office of the Global Forum on Taxation.

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

A tax evasion affair involving Germany and increased international tax competition had a direct impact on Liechtenstein’s standing as financial centre. In March, the Principality thus also committed itself to the new OECD standard on the exchange of information on tax matters and will cooperate comprehensively with foreign authorities in this respect. This decision de facto implies a relaxation of Liechtenstein’s banking secrecy laws. This is closely related to the negotiations on an anti-fraud agreement with the European Union which had not been completed by the end of 2009 and provides for the comprehensive exchange of information in the field of direct and indirect taxation. 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 that ensures an adequate level of information exchange and legal certainty, preserves banking secrecy and positions Liechtenstein as a reliable and respected financial centre.

Accession to the Schengen area, which was originally sought simultaneously with Switzerland for November 2008, was delayed for technical reasons.

3. South Tyrol

South Tyrol continues to enjoy a special status within Austrian foreign policy. Austria’s protective function, enshrined in the Treaty of Paris of 5 September 1946, is exercised in a responsible manner by the Austrian Federal Government. It is expressed in an ongoing supportive interest in the autonomy, political and general development in South Tyrol and in regular talks between those responsible in Vienna, Innsbruck and Bolzano. Development has shown that autonomy may also be understood as being a common good.
of all three linguistic groups (German, Italian, Ladin) living in South Tyrol and as such is to be preserved and dynamically developed. Austria maintains very amicable, good neighbourly relations with Italy. At European level, South Tyrol autonomy serves as a model for the resolution of minority conflict. The common membership of Austria and Italy in the European Union has created a number of additional links that are also beneficial for South Tyrol.

The report of the Federal Minister for European and International Affairs on the Development of South Tyrol Autonomy 2007–2008 was considered on 2 July in the constituent meeting of the Austrian National Council’s subcommittee on South Tyrol chaired by MP Hermann Gahr.

South Tyrol has one seat in the European Parliament, which Herbert Dorfmann took over from Michl Ebner following the elections in June. At the end of 2008/beginning of 2009, the members of the new South Tyrolean provincial government were announced: Governor Luis Durnwalder and Provincial Councillors Hans Berger (agriculture, tourism), Thomas Widmann (crafts, industry, trade), Richard Theiner (family, health, social affairs), Florian Mussner (construction, Ladin school and culture), Michl Laimer (spatial planning, environment and energy), Sabina Kasslatter Mur (culture, education). Members on the Italian side are Provincial Councillors Christian Tommasini (Italian culture and school) and Barbara Repetto (innovation, IT, labour, Italian vocational training, finances and budget). At the 55th ordinary assembly meeting, held on 18 April in Merano, Richard Theiner was elected new Chairman of the South Tyrolean People’s Party (Südtiroler Volkspartei, SVP) taking over this function from Elmar Pichler Rolle.

2009 was a commemorative year during which the Federal Province of Tyrol together with the Autonomous Provinces of South Tyrol and Trentino remembered the events of 1809 and Andreas Hofer. Bridging the gap between the traditional and the modern, activities focused on reflecting myths and commemorating culture in a contemporary way and on creating new momentum for future-oriented societal policy work (see www.1809–2009.eu). The leading theme for the commemorative year was **History meets Future**, whose highlight was the festival parade in Innsbruck on 20 September. The five-hour ceremonial event was attended by Federal President Heinz Fischer, Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann, Vice-Chancellor Josef Pröll, the three Provincial Governors Günther Platter, Luis Durnwalder, Lorenzo Dellai and some 100,000 visitors. About 30,000 participants from traditional folk associations in Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino celebrated in colourful traditional costumes and music both the traditions they have upheld over centuries as well as present-day prosperity. In line with the idea suggested by Margit Klammer, the South Tyrolean winner of an artists’ competition, the crown of thorns which was carried on the parade was decorated with 2009 roses as a symbol of a flourishing Tyrol. A varied programme of events celebrating the Andreas Hofer Year, which was particularly directed at young people,
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included readings, concerts, theatre performances and exhibitions. A central major project was the provincial exhibition, jointly designed by Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino under the heading of “Labyrinth Freedom” at Franzensfeste/Fortezza which presented present-day life in the region from a multi-faceted, creative and artistic perspective.

The large number of initiatives and projects organised in connection with the commemorative and future-oriented year 2009 have also added momentum to the European Region Tyrol, which offers many opportunities for combining the interests and resources of more than 700,000 people. At their joint meeting held in Innsbruck on 15 October, the three Provincial Governments of Tyrol, South Tyrol and Trentino had decided to raise the profile of Euregio. Since December, the European Region Tyrol has had a common office based in Bolzano and is charged with implementing cross-border projects and representing common concerns (for instance in the transport sector) in a more effective manner.

A ceremonial event commemorating the 40th anniversary of the South Tyrol Package Agreement of 1969 was held at the Merano Kursalon on 21 November. The event was attended by a large number of contemporary witnesses and guests from Austria (including Ambassador Ludwig Steiner).

In contrast to the international environment, the South Tyrolean economy was generally stable in 2009 and was even marked by a slight plus. An increase in employment of 1.0 per cent was registered in the labour market and the inflation rate remained stable throughout the entire year averaging between 0.5 and 1.0 per cent. In the tourism sector, the previous year’s record number of overnight stays was again topped. Offsetting positive against negative developments throughout the year, the South Tyrolean economy registered a slight increase in GDP growth of +0.3 per cent in 2009. From the autonomy policy perspective, the outcome of the negotiations on a new financing model for South Tyrol concluded on 30 November between Provincial Governor Durnwalder and the Italian Finance Minister Giulio Tremonti is of particular relevance. According to this agreement, which following its adoption will only be amendable by mutual consent, South Tyrol’s share in all taxes levied in the province will amount to nine tenths. The South Tyrolean Provincial Government considers this new regulation as a first step towards tax sovereignty. At the same time, this increase in assumption of responsibility will contribute towards strengthening autonomy.

The law on tax federalism, which had been adopted under the reform of the Italian constitution, came into effect on 21 May. This law explicitly refers to the special status of the regions with a special statute and the autonomous provinces of Bolzano and Trentino.

With regard to the issue of place names (toponomastics), the South Tyrolean Provincial Government announced that during the current legislative period
it intends to introduce a draft bill replacing the Tolomei place name decrees dating from the 1920s.

There was a very active exchange of visits at all levels between Austria and South Tyrol. On 6 March, for instance, Provincial Governor Luis Durnwalder, SVP Chairman Elmar Pichler Rolle, MP Siegfried Brugger and Senator Helga Thaler Außerhofer met for an exchange of views with Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger in Innsbruck, and on 17 March SVP Chairman Elmar Pichler Rolle and Governor Luis Durnwalder paid a visit to Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in Vienna. Governor Durnwalder, members of the Provincial Government and many other eminent figures from South Tyrol took part in the festival parade in Innsbruck. The chairman of the Austrian National Council’s subcommittee on South Tyrol and MP (National Council Representative), Hermann Gahr, paid several visits to South Tyrol for talks. On the occasion of a presentation of Tyrolean business and science, Tyrolean Provincial Councillor Patrizia Zoller-Frischauf visited Bolzano on 30 November.

On 16 February, former Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister Alois Mock was awarded the Grand Order of Merit of the Province of South Tyrol by Luis Durnwalder.

4. Nuclear Safety

The FMEIA continues to contribute towards the implementation of objectives relating to the shaping of Austria’s anti-nuclear policy as laid down in the government programme. Right at the beginning of the year, for instance, attempts to enable – in contrast to the shut-down obligations in force – an extension to the operation period of Block 5 of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) in Lithuania as well as the re-commissioning of the Bohunice NPP in Slovakia and the Kosloduj NPP in Bulgaria were successfully opposed in cooperation with the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. In line with the provisions set out in the EU accession treaty, Lithuania complied with its obligation to completely shut down Block 2 of the Ignalina NPP on 31 December.

The safety dialogue with neighbouring countries operating nuclear power plants was continued and further intensified. Under the Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement expert-level meetings were held with Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Switzerland and for the first time also with Poland. In these talks, information that is essential to safeguarding Austria’s safety interests was exchanged on legal provisions and organisation of authorities, energy supply, radiation monitoring, emergency protection planning and nuclear energy programmes, with Austria voicing its concerns on various aspects. Italy agreed to start negotiations on concluding such an agreement with Austria, which had called for such negotiations in response to Italy’s decision to resume nuclear energy production.
The safety dialogue on the Temelín NPP was continued with the Czech Republic. Following up on the previous year’s findings by the Mixed Parliamentary Commission, open technical issues continued to be dealt with under the Bilateral Nuclear Information Agreement and in discussions with technical experts.

With respect to the expansion of the Mochovce NPP in Slovakia, Austria succeeded in asserting its call for implementation of a cross-border environmental impact assessment (EIP), as part of which a public hearing was held in Vienna and a comprehensive expert statement was drafted by Austria and presented in bilateral consultations.

At European level, Austria continued to support the development of high and legally binding safety standards for nuclear power plants. An important step towards meeting this goal is reflected in the Council Directive establishing a Community Framework for the Nuclear Safety of Nuclear Installations adopted on 25 June. Improvements to the current status particularly concern the legally binding nature, the broad scope of application, the incorporation of the “safety first” principle to be observed by both authorities and operators and the provisions regarding transparency. This is of course a first step, which is to be followed by many more.

At international level, Austria calls for a move to sustainable sources of energy and for this to be particularly effected through the development of the existing “energy partnerships” with selected European partner countries. In spite of the unfavourable framework conditions caused by the economic crisis, it was still possible to organise successful events and projects, particularly in conjunction with Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine and for the first time also with Belarus.

5. Alpine Convention

The focus of activities was the Xth Alpine Conference, attended by the environment ministers of the Alpine states, also marked the conclusion of over two years of French Presidency of the Alpine Convention. At this conference of the states party to the Alpine Convention, an Action Plan on Climate Change in the Alps was adopted, giving concrete Alpine-specific recommendations for action and setting out longer-term initiatives including a timeframe. Furthermore, the 2nd Contribution to the Report on the State of the Alps dealing with “water and water management issues” was also adopted. Slovenia assumed the Alpine Convention’s next two-year Presidency. The Review Committee completed the first review procedure on the implementation of the Alpine Convention and its Protocols; both the review report and the recommendations based on the report were adopted by the ministers. In line with a focus on streamlining procedures, it will now be necessary to prepare synthesis reports, which will then act as the basis for more detailed reviews. Concerning the declaration “Population and Culture”, the results
of the national implementation processes were collected and standardised reports prepared.

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

6.1. Danube Cooperation Process

Emanating from Austria’s traditional commitment to and interest in Central and South Eastern Europe, an initiative was launched – initially with Romania – aimed at raising awareness of the European Commission and the EU in general with regard to the opportunities and challenges of the Danube region.

After the European Commission had, in response to this, for the first time mentioned the possibility of preparing a Strategy for the Danube region modelled on the Strategy for the Baltic Sea, the 14 states party to the “Danube Co-operation Process” (a consultation platform composed of Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine, set up in 2002) were initially won over to this idea.

Subsequently, all EU Member States were successfully convinced of the proposal and in June the European Council mandated the European Commission to prepare by the end of 2010 a comprehensive strategy for the Danube region in consultation with the states and stakeholders concerned. The strategy is to be adopted during the Hungarian Presidency in the first half year of 2011.

By the end of the year, all states concerned had appointed National Contact Points (Austria: Ambassador Johannes Eigner, FMEIA) and started to forward first written statements to the European Commission. The aim is to establish a framework and act as a catalyst for projects and activities – additional funding and/or the creation of additional institutions is, however, not foreseen.

Although it is currently not possible to anticipate the exact content of the strategy, attention will focus on the topics of networks (transport, energy, information and communication technology), the environment and socio-economic development.

6.2. Focus on the Black Sea

The Black Sea which borders on the Danube region is a focal point of the European neighbourhood – as an area marked by trade and energy transit, a region of political changes, a bridge to Central Asia and the Middle East, and which is also characterised by risks to stability caused by “frozen conflicts”, cross-border crime, migration and competition for energy resources.

The European Union sends clear signals by launching initiatives like the Black Sea Synergy and in 2009 the Eastern Partnership aimed at cooperating with the partner countries in this very sensitive region with a view to strengthening their stability. The only way to tackle such issues is for
Europe to actively approach our new neighbours in the East. For Austria too, it is important to take the necessary steps in order to be able to tap into the enormous opportunities opening up in this region and to support industry’s existing commitment by increasing political, diplomatic and cultural involvement. In this spirit and in order to pave the way towards discussion of a common sustainable approach, a first regional conference was organised by the FMEIA in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Federation of Austrian Industries and all ambassadors, trade delegates and leading enterprises active in the region.

6.3. Navigation on the Danube

By adopting Revision 4 of CEVNI (European Code for Inland Waterways), an important step towards harmonisation of navigation rules for waterways was taken with respect to navigation on the Danube. Currently, the European river commissions are dealing with this recommendation by the UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) with a view to adapting the navigation rules in their scopes as closely as possible to CEVNI.

Work aimed at implementing NAIADES (Integrated European Action Programme for Inland Waterway Transport) was launched in 2008 and continued successfully under the Platina project, which was coordinated by Austria. Activities aimed at harmonisation of technical and nautical regulations were continued by the Danube Commission. Since it remains unclear when the revised Belgrade Convention will come into effect, the Commission’s Secretariat was appointed for a further three-year period. The revised Belgrade Convention provides for the adoption of binding unanimous decisions. Furthermore, it foresees an extension of the current membership to include France and Turkey as well as granting membership status in the Danube Commission to the European Union.
C. Global Cooperation – The United Nations

I. Introduction

The Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, singled out climate change as the most fundamental challenge confronting humanity, thus designating the year 2009 as the “year of climate change”. Every area of activity, from energy and business to healthcare, foodstuffs, development, safety and security, is affected by the impact of climate change and therefore work on the successful completion of a global climate convention is of crucial importance. Apart from this global challenge facing the international community, 2009 was again marked by conflicts and political tensions under which civilians, and children and women in particular, were to suffer most.

Within the United Nations (UN), and especially in its capacity as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Austria thus dedicated its efforts specifically to strengthening the protection of civilians in armed conflict (with a particular focus on the special protection of women and children), the rule of law, the protection of human rights and disarmament issues. Austria also maintained its efforts aimed at promoting the involvement of women as leaders in peace initiatives.

The entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December paved the way for a new level of quality in the EU's external representation within the United Nations, which aims to enable the EU to play an even more significant role in the UN in the future.

II. The United Nations General Assembly

1. Procedural Matters

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

The General Debate of the 64th General Assembly of the UN took place in New York from 23 to 29 September. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger. At the invitation of the UN Secretary General, a Summit on Climate Change was convened on 22 September to create political momentum for the negotiations on a new climate convention in Copenhagen in December. Together with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, Federal President Fischer chaired a round table discussion on renewable energy, technology transfer and adaptation measures for particularly affected countries and regions. On the margins of the General Debate, a Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, chaired by US President Barack Obama, was held on 24 September in which Federal President Fischer and Federal Minister Spindelegger participated. On 24 and 25 September, the Sixth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was
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held in which Federal Minister Spindelegger participated as Austrian co-chair of the Article XIV Process to promote the entry into force of the CTBT.

In his statement to the General Assembly of the UN on 26 September, Federal Minister Spindelegger stressed the proactive Austrian commitment in the field of disarmament and emphasised the role played by the Vienna-based international organisations in this context, referring specifically to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO). Federal Minister Spindelegger pointed out that dialogue was the only meaningful tool for confronting the global challenges, underlining that there was no alternative to the UN as a global platform and stressing the central role it plays in sustainable peacekeeping, disarmament, climate protection and in combating crises. In this context, he stressed the particular interest small and medium-sized states had in a multilateral system, which is based on effective multilateralism and the rule of law. He also explained Austria’s priorities for its membership of the UN Security Council during the 2009–2010 period, emphasising that the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and women and children in particular, were of special concern to Austria. In this context, he explained that during its Presidency of the Security Council in November, Austria will prepare a package of concrete actions aimed at improving the international protection instruments as part of a new resolution. Moreover, Austria will continue to maintain its focus on the role of women in the promotion of peace and security and take a clear stance against sexual violence in conflict situations. Federal Minister Spindelegger commented on the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Chad and the Central African Republic and addressed the situation in the Middle East. In no uncertain terms, Federal Minister Spindelegger firmly repudiated the Iranian President’s remarks against Israel as being unacceptable, stressing that any attempts at abusing the UN General Assembly as a platform for intolerance, anti-Semitism, and racial hatred were to be rejected.

During the Ministerial Week, Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger held numerous bilateral talks. Federal President Fischer held talks with the presidents of Chile, Finland, Iraq, Lebanon and Vietnam and, together with Federal Minister Spindelegger, met the presidents of Russia and Somalia. Federal Minister Spindelegger held talks with the President of the General Assembly and the foreign ministers of Costa Rica, Georgia, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Iceland, Oman, Israel, Azerbaijan, Syria, Bhutan, Ethiopia, Iraq, Turkey, Kazakhstan, Iran, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Armenia and also met with the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

2. Political Affairs

2.1. 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 voting, Malta and Cyprus, which are members of the abovementioned 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 reached on the resolution on “Assistance to the Palestinian people”, 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 “Oil slick on Lebanese shores”, sponsored by Lebanon, was also supported by the EU. The EU could, however, not agree on a common voting policy regarding the Arab draft resolution on the “United Nations Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict”. While Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia voted in favour of the resolution, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia voted against. Austria as well as the other remaining 14 EU Member States abstained from voting.

2.2. Disarmament and International Security

Following up on an initiative launched by a newly created core group which also includes Austria, the Secretary-General of the United Nations presented an Action Plan for Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Non-Proliferation, which elaborates on the preceding year’s Five-Point Plan on Nuclear Disarmament.

Deliberations in the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) were marked by a positive atmosphere, which was primarily attributable to two factors: on the one hand, the new administration of the United States brought about a change of attitude in numerous disarmament areas, which meant that the USA voted in favour of more draft resolutions than before. On the other hand, deliberations were already influenced by the NPT Review Conference scheduled for May 2010, the success of which delegations were loath to jeopardise. As the chair of the Geneva Conference on Disarmament, Austria was responsible for the successful negotiation and adoption by consensus of the resolution “Conference on Disarmament Report”. Numerous amendment proposals had, however, made negotiations on the resolution difficult. This year’s resolution on the Arms Trade Treaty was adopted with 153 votes in favour, 19 abstentions and one vote against (Zimbabwe). It is the first such resolution to contain a mandate to negotiate an Arms Trade Treaty, namely at a conference of states to be held in 2012. The decision-making modalities for this UN conference were, however, the topic of lively debates. While a supra-regional group of co-authors headed by the United Kingdom was able to win over the USA as the largest arms exporting state worldwide for the draft resolution by stipulating the consensus requirement, a supra-regional group of influential UN member states – which followed a German
initiative and was also supported by Austria – adopted a critical attitude towards the consensus requirement, pointing out that it would inevitably mean that such consensus was based on the smallest common denominator. The final text of the resolution eventually contained a slightly modified version of the consensus requirement. In explaining its vote, Austria, just like 24 other states, expressed its concerns regarding the principle of consensus. On the initiative of Canada, the resolution on the Treaty Banning the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices (Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, FMCT) was discussed for the first time since 2004 and adopted by consensus. Based on a resolution introduced by Chile as principal sponsor, an international conference of States Parties and Signatories to the Treaties that establish Nuclear-Weapon Free Zones will be convened in New York on 30 April 2010. Austria issued declarations on banning cluster munitions, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Arms Trade Treaty, on the multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle, the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones, a convention banning nuclear weapons, promoting the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the FMCT.

On 24 September, an Article XIV Conference facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT took place in New York, at which Federal Minster Michael Spindelegger participated representing Austria. This was the first such conference to be attended by the United States, which were represented by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Austria and Costa Rica, which had for the first time co-chaired the 2007 conference in Vienna, handed-over the biennial chair to France and Morocco. During Austria’s term as co-chair the number of states that ratified the CTBT had increased to 150, representing a tripling since 1999.

The first two meetings of the Working Group on an Arms Trade Treaty that is composed of all UN Member States were held from 2 to 6 March and from 13 to 17 July in New York. While the vast majority of UN Member States, involving particularly African, Latin American and Western states including the EU, supported a robust treaty that is to govern in a global and legally binding manner both imports and exports as well as transit of conventional weapons, Pakistan, Egypt, China, India, Iran and the Russian Federation were sceptical regarding the viability of such a treaty. The United States, which had until recently opposed an arms trade treaty, announced a general review of its position and adopted a wait-and-see approach. In its declarations, Austria advocated a robust arms trade treaty that is to include all conventional arms and weapons plus associated ammunition and related parts and components.

2.3. The United Nations Disarmament Commission

The meeting it held from 13 April to 1 May marked the start of a new three-year working cycle for the United Nations Disarmament Commission
(UNDC). Besides the items it had dealt with so far, i.e. recommendations for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation as well as confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and weapons, the agenda for the forthcoming three years for the first time also includes a third item dealing with the preparation of elements for a draft declaration on the 2010 decade marking the fourth disarmament decade. Austria made declarations on the CTBT, FMCT and the nuclear weapons convention and opposed mentioning the promotion of international cooperation in the field of nuclear energy in the draft declaration.

3. Economic, Development and Environmental Affairs

Work in the Second Committee (Economic and Financial Affairs) focused on the global economic and financial crisis. During a high-level conference the General Assembly on 25 and 26 June explored the impacts of the crisis on development. The conference agreed on a number of short and long-term actions aimed at mitigating the consequences of the crisis, initiated a dialogue on re-designing the global financial architecture that is to take better account of the needs and concerns of all Member States and decided that the United Nations is to remain committed to addressing economic and financial issues. State Secretary Reinhold Lopatka represented Austria at this conference.

The Second Committee’s deliberations on environment and sustainability were dominated by the challenges of climate change and the forthcoming Copenhagen Summit on Climate Change from 7 to 19 December. Notwithstanding the high level of attention dedicated to this topic, progress in the negotiations on resolutions dealing with climate change, biodiversity, reduction of disasters, desertification and renewable energy was limited to individual issues only. Against this background it is, however, of major significance that agreement was reached on holding a follow-up conference in 2012 further to the sustainable development conferences in Rio de Janeiro (1992) and in Johannesburg (2002). The most important topics to be discussed at this follow-up conference will be the green economy concept and the institutional framework for sustainable development.

4. Human Rights

See C. III and G.III.

5. Drug Control and Crime Prevention

See C. III, H.II. and H.III.
6. Social Policy

The topics of the 47th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD), which took place in New York from 4 to 13 February, were social integration, the impact of the global crisis on social development and review of the implementation of action programmes for social groups. The CSocD adopted resolutions on full employment and decent work, on review of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, on youth policies and programmes and on the social dimension of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). All resolutions on social issues, dealt with by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, and Cultural) in its session from 5 October to 24 November, were adopted by consensus by the Plenary of the UNGA. The negotiations on the resolution on ageing were conducted by Austria on behalf of the EU Presidency.

7. International Women’s Affairs


8. Humanitarian Affairs

This year, voluntary contributions by UN Member States to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) amounted to 399.9 million US dollars, making 2009 the first year in which the Fund missed its defined annual financial target of 450 million US dollars. Thus the Fund was not fully able to accomplish its primary task of ensuring the immediate provision of funds for relief measures in the event of humanitarian crises. In contrast to this, the High-Level CERF Donor Conference on 9 December succeeded in mobilising pledges for 2010 donations amounting to around 424 million US dollars, making it the most successful donor conference since the inception of the CERF in 2006. Including the five new donor countries, which participated for the first time in the 2009 conference, 115 UN Member States have made available voluntary contributions to the CERF. The ten largest donor countries (of which seven are EU Member States) funded about 83 per cent – 3 per cent more than the previous year – of the total volume of donations. The draft resolutions on humanitarian affairs adopted by consensus by the GA related to one country-specific case (El Salvador) and otherwise dealt with thematic issues (concerning the safety and security of humanitarian personnel, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance, “White Helmets”, assistance to the Palestinian people). Austria supported four of the five plenary resolutions as co-sponsor.

9. Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

The 52nd session of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) took place in Vienna from 3 to 12 June and was mainly domi-
nated by the 10th anniversary of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III). Other topics dealt with concerned the importance of outer space for society, water management and climate change as well as international cooperation to promote the application of space technologies for sustainable development. In parallel, an exhibition on Austrian expertise and projects in the field of space technology and their applications was held. Moreover, from 2 to 4 June, the UN Platform for Space-Based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) organised a workshop which was co-funded by Austria and dealt with capacity building and disaster reduction. UN-SPIDER is a programme launched by the Vienna-based Office for Outer Space Affairs (OOSÅ) and has been supported by Austria since its establishment in 2006. The annual space symposium in Graz took place from 8 to 11 September and focused on the topic of “Small Satellite Programmes for Sustainable Development”.

10. Administrative and Budgetary Affairs

One of the main topics dealt with by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary Affairs) was the regular UN budget for the period from 2010–2011, on which agreement was reached after lengthy negotiations on 24 December. The budget thus amounts to 5.156 billion US dollars and the UN’s staffing table includes a total of 10,281 posts. At the Vienna UN headquarters, 22 new posts were established and the promotion of six posts in the field of conference management to higher levels was approved. Furthermore, the budget resolution also calls upon the UNSG to submit proposals for strengthening the UNODC in its 2012–2013 draft budget. Austria’s contribution to the 2010 UN ordinary budget amounts to 17.9 million US dollars.

The negotiation on the UN contribution key for the 2010–2012 period was the other principal topic on the Fifth Committee’s agenda. As the collectively largest contributor to the regular UN budget (39%), the EU endeavoured to reduce its – compared to its economic power (30.5%) – excessive contribution and committing Brazil, the Russian Federation, India and China (BRIC) to pay a higher financial contribution. With the support of the G-77, the BRIC countries, however, rejected this suggestion. The compromise subsequently agreed on was that no changes were to be undertaken in calculating the contribution key for 2010–12 and that a review process was to be launched for an improved methodology for the 2013–15 period. For the period from 2010–2012, the Austrian share in the regular UN budget will be reduced from 0.887% to 0.851%.

The annual budget approved for peacekeeping operations (PKO) amounts to 7.735 billion US dollars for the period from July 2009 to June 2010. In the course of the negotiations on the budget for the support account for PKO, which also dealt with restructuring of the Investigations Division of the
Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), it was ensured that the Vienna UN headquarters will be confirmed as one of the regional centres for the restructured Investigations Division in the field.

### 11. International Law

Work in the Sixth Committee (Legal) focused on the annual International Law Week, legal issues relating to administration of justice at the United Nations, international terrorism, the principle of universal jurisdiction, criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission, and the rule of law. Furthermore, the Sixth Committee dealt with the reports of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), whose resolutions are coordinated by Austria as well as those of the Charter and Host Country Committees.

#### 11.1. International Law Week

The International Law Week, which is based on an Austrian proposal, was held from 26 to 30 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, 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 from the International Law Commission.

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

In the relevant negotiations Austria, in its capacity as UN host country, advocated improvements to the legal status of UN staff who do not currently enjoy official UN employment status. Deliberations will be continued in 2010 based on the report prepared by the UNSG.

#### 11.3. Universal Jurisdiction

Taking place for the first time this year, the discussions on the topic of universal jurisdiction confirmed the incorporation of universal jurisdiction in current international law and underlined the important role it played in countering impunity. Deliberations also dealt with issues relating to the application of universal jurisdiction and its potential positioning. Discussions will be continued in 2010 based on the report prepared by the UNSG.
11.4. Rule of Law

The special topic discussed this year by the Sixth Committee under the agenda item Rule of Law was entitled “Promoting the rule of law at the international level”. UNGA resolution 64/116 confirmed that the dialogue with Member States on the rule of law, as initiated by the Rule of Law Unit, was to be continued at international level. On the initiative of Austria a passage was included in the resolution that stresses the importance of equipping the Rule of Law Unit with the necessary financial and human resources to enable it to fulfil its tasks in an effective and sustainable manner. “Laws and practices of Member States in implementing international law” was defined as the special topic for the 65th UNGA.

11.5. Terrorism

See Section H.III.

11.6. 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 64/110 was adopted as a short-term measure by which the states were again requested to substantiate jurisdiction over crimes of a serious nature committed by their nationals in their capacity as UN officials or experts on UN missions. The discussions on “strengthening the rule of law at international level” stressed the important role played by the rule of law in all areas and aspects and pledged support for the UN Rule of Law Unit.

The UNGA also adopted resolutions on the reports of the Charter and Host Country Committees. The presidents of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and for Rwanda (ICTR) presented their annual reports to the UNGA and the annual resolution on the Law of the Sea and Fisheries was also adopted.

III. The United Nations Security Council

1. Austria’s Membership of the Security Council

January 2009 marked the start of Austria’s two-year membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC). Following its UNSC memberships in 1973/74 and 1991/92, Austria is now for the third time serving on this most influential UN body. During the period under review, membership of the UNSC was composed of the five permanent members China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA, and the non-permanent members Burkina Faso, Costa Rica, Croatia, Japan, Libya, Mexico, Turkey, Uganda, Vietnam and Austria.
Right from the beginning of its UNSC membership, Austria was faced with key challenges of international crisis management. Indeed, the very first days were marked by fighting in and around the Gaza Strip. On the sixth day of Austria’s UNSC membership Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger took part in a UNSC special session in which Austria proactively supported the broadest possible consensus among the 15 Council members on a draft resolution calling for an immediate end to all acts of violence and access to humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip. After intensive negotiations, Security Council resolution 1860 was adopted with 14 votes in favour and one abstention (USA).

In 2009, the UNSC convened for 194 formal sessions and 110 informal consultations, in which developments in all countries where there is active involvement of the United Nations either through peace missions, the presence of special envoys or other representatives of the UN Secretary General, were discussed. Based on these deliberations, the Security Council adopted 48 resolutions, 35 presidential statements and 36 press releases in 2009. The topics dealt with by the UNSC in the period under review focused on the developments in the Middle East and on issues relating particularly to conflict management in Africa, including in East Congo, Somalia and Darfur. Another important thematic priority of the UNSC’s activities were issues relating to nuclear non-proliferation, also in response to several missile tests conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). Chaired by US President Barack Obama, a UNSC summit on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was held on 24 September, at which Federal President Heinz Fischer and Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger represented Austria. In its unanimously adopted resolution 1887 (2009), the UNSC committed itself to the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Right from the beginning of its UNSC membership, Austria has used every opportunity to actively promote – in a targeted manner and as a matter of priority – the rule of law, respect of human rights and international humanitarian law, the protection of civilians, and particularly of women and children, as well as strengthening the role of women in post-conflict situations.

In 2009, a very concrete instance in this respect was the armed conflict between the government of Sri Lanka and the Tamil Tigers (LTTE) terrorist organisation, when hundreds of thousands of civilians belonging to the Tamil minority were trapped between battle lines in the clashes’ final stages. Initially it was indeed mainly the non-permanent Council members Mexico, Costa Rica, France and Austria, who together with UNSG Ban Ki-moon, urged the UNSC to deal with this issue – which eventually proved fruitful. On the initiative of Austria, an informal meeting between ten UNSC Member States, numerous international NGOs and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was held in New York on 11 May at which Austria was represented by Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger. After the meeting, Federal Minister Spindelegger, together with French Foreign Min-
ister Kouchner and British Foreign Secretary Miliband, gave a joint press conference on the humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka. Based on the joint initiative of Austria, France and the UK, the UNSC on 13 May for the first time agreed on a formal UNSC press statement on Sri Lanka, demanding that both sides abide by international humanitarian law, insisting that the LTTE lay down its arms and that the government of Sri Lanka facilitate humanitarian access and evacuation of civilians. Following this statement, the Sri Lankan government agreed to a two-day ceasefire, which at least enabled the evacuation of thousands of refugees from the conflict zone.

The protection of civilians was also the central theme of Austria’s Presidency of the UNSC during the month of November 2009. After a high-level debate in the course of which more than 60 states took the floor, the Security Council, chaired by Federal Minister Spindelegger, on 11 November unanimously adopted resolution 1894 (2009) – which had been initiated and negotiated by Austria. One of the goals pursued by this resolution is to ensure that during their peacekeeping missions the United Nations themselves contribute to improved protection of civilians in their respective area of operations. This is to be achieved inter alia by the obligation to draft mission-wide protection strategies, offering better access to humanitarian relief organisations as well as improved training and preparation of peacekeepers for their protection tasks. The principles enshrined in this resolution were soon to be put into practice for the first time, namely when the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was extended in December.

Furthermore, Austria also advocated observance of the rule of law principles, making them an integral element of its work on the two UNSC sanctions committees which it chaired in 2009, namely the 1267 Committee (Al-Qaida and Taliban) and the 1591 Committee (Sudan sanctions committee), and the UNSC’s Informal Working Group on International Tribunals, which it also chaired in 2009. The main task of the “1267 Committee” was to review the existing list of some 500 individuals and entities considered as being associated with Al-Qaida and the Taliban and to delete entries that are no longer justified. In addition, the entire proceedings of the 1267 Committee were up for review at the end of 2009. Austria contributed significantly to the unanimous agreement reached by the UNSC in resolution 1904 (2009) of 17 December, which provides for the creation of the function of an ombudsman. For the first time, individuals and institutions who believe that they were unjustly included in the “1267 list” and seek assistance in their efforts towards deletion from this list will now have the opportunity to turn to an independent contact point for help.

Although this is the third time that Austria has been a member of the UNSC, as mentioned above, this is the first Austrian UNSC membership since our country joined the European Union. In 2009, Austria was thus for the first time able to benefit from its experience as a participant in the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, whose basic positions naturally play an impor-
tant role in the definition of Austria’s position in the Security Council. At the same time, Austria (together with the UK and France the only other EU Member State in the Security Council) undertook specific efforts in 2009 to keep the respective EU Presidency, the other EU Member States and the EU Delegation in New York informed about all relevant developments in the UNSC. As had been the case during its two previous UNSC memberships, Austria felt committed to pursuing a comprehensive information policy and ensuring transparency about UNSC decisions vis-à-vis all UN Member States, a large majority of which had elected Austria to the UNSC. Besides, Austria strove to use its membership in the UNSC with a view to further strengthening Austria’s position as a UN headquarters and platform for dialogue and peace. A shining example in this context were the high-level talks between Morocco and Polisaro on the future of Western Sahara that had been facilitated by the UN and took place in the Lower Austrian village of Dürnstein in August.

A detailed presentation of the positions adopted by Austria with respect to the individual items on the UNSC’s 2009 agenda will be given in the subsequent section on the work of the UN Security Council.

2. The Work of the Security Council

2.1. Middle East

In response to the fighting in and around the Gaza Strip, the UNSC, after intensive deliberations, which were also held at ministerial level involving the participation of Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger, adopted resolution 1860 on 8 January which calls for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire eventually leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza. The UNSC furthermore called for the unimpeded provision and distribution throughout Gaza of humanitarian assistance. The UN Member States were called upon to provide arrangements and guarantees in order to sustain a durable ceasefire, including measures to prevent illicit trafficking in arms and ammunition and to ensure the sustained reopening of the crossing points to the Gaza Strip on the basis of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access between the Palestinian Authority and Israel. In the light of the dramatic supply situation facing the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, Austria had attached particular importance to demanding the opening of border crossings. In the consultations on the Gaza crisis Austria strongly advocated strict observance of international humanitarian law and demanded that all parties investigate allegations relating to violations of both human rights and humanitarian law. With regard to attacks on UN facilities, Austria supported the swift implementation of the recommendations made by the UN commission of inquiry.

At a ministerial debate, chaired by Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and attended by Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger, the UNSC adopted a
presidential statement on 11 May that again stressed the urgency of a resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The UNSC also confirmed its commitment to the two-state solution and again called upon both parties to fulfil their obligations under the Performance-Based Road Map.

In 2009, the fragility of the truce in South Lebanon was again strikingly illustrated by the isolated rockets fired into Israeli territory, counter-fire launched by the Israeli army, regular violation of Lebanese airspace by the Israeli air force and other incidents. All in all, the UN troops in Lebanon (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, UNIFIL), however, succeeded in maintaining the tense calm South of the River Litani also during the lead-up to the elections and the government formation phase in Lebanon. By unanimously adopting resolution 1884 on 27 August, the UNSC extended UNIFIL's mandate by a further year until 31 August 2010. The resumption of full diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria marked an important step towards normalisation of the relations between the two states. Hardly any progress was, however, made with respect to a durable ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon. In the UNSC's deliberations on Lebanon, Austria advocated an end to the violations of Lebanese airspace by Israeli overflights, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Ghajar and the Shebaa Farms area in South Lebanon as well as the disarmament of Hezbollah and Palestinian militia in the UNRWA refugee camps in Lebanon. In the light of constant reports on arms smuggling into South Lebanon, Austria called for the strict observance of the arms embargo. In a press statement issued on 1 March, the UNSC welcomed the commencement of the functioning of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in The Hague as an important step towards bringing those responsible for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and other victims to justice. The then head of the International Independent Investigation Commission, Daniel Bellemare, continued investigating the bomb attack on Hariri of 14 February 2005 in his new function as Chief Prosecutor of the Special Tribunal. The Special Envoy for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559, Terje Roed Larsen, informed the UNSC twice about relevant developments. Resolution 1559 calls for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from Lebanon and the disarmament and disbanding of all militia active in Lebanon and pledges to support the Lebanese government in extending its control over the entire Lebanese territory.

2.2. Iraq

The head of the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Special Representative of the UNSG Staffan de Mistura, reported to the UNSC on the situation in Iraq on a quarterly basis. The UN focused its activities in Iraq on the regional elections and on preparing for the national elections in 2010 as well as on efforts towards resolving internal border conflicts and open procedural issues. The appointment of the former Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ad Melkert, as head of UNAMI in
July signalled a more pronounced emphasis on reconstruction and economic development by the UN. Austria supported UNAMI efforts towards national reconciliation and strengthening the protection of human rights and the rule of law. By adopting resolution 1883 on 7 August, the UNSC extended the UNAMI mandate by twelve months. In presidential and press statements, the UNSC condemned the bomb attacks against Iraqi ministries and diplomatic missions of 19 August – the sixth anniversary of the bombing of the UN headquarters in Baghdad – and the series of attacks of 25 October. On 21 December, the UNSR adopted resolution 1905, extending the mandates of the Development Fund for Iraq and the International Advisory and Monitoring Board for Iraq until 31 December 2010.

2.3. **Iran**

Although the conflict involving the Iranian nuclear programme continued, the UNSC did not act on this issue in 2009. Only the resolution adopted by the IAEA Governing Board on 27 November with the votes of all E3+3 states (France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the United States of America, the Russian Federation and China), which calls upon Iran to inter alia observe all UNSC resolutions – and thus specifically to suspend all nuclear enrichment and reprocessing activities – and to cooperate with the IAEA, was referred to the UNSC. With respect to the arms embargo against Iran, the sanctions committee continued its monitoring activities pursuant to resolution 1737.

2.4. **Afghanistan**

By adopting resolution 1868 (2009) on 23 March, the UNSC extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) by a further twelve months. Based on this resolution, the head of UNAMA and Special Representative of the UNSG for Afghanistan, Kai Eide, reported to the UNSC on the situation in Afghanistan at quarterly intervals. On 15 July, the UNSC adopted a presidential statement on the presidential elections in Afghanistan scheduled for 20 August, in which the importance of free, fair and credible elections was stressed. Prompted by the facts that the announcement of the official election result was delayed by several months and a series of attacks hit public and international institutions, the UNSC released a number of press statements on Afghanistan. On 6 November, the UNSG informed the UNSC about his trip to Afghanistan following the terrorist attack against a UN guest house in Kabul on 28 October in which several UN staff lost their lives. On the same day, the UNSC adopted a press statement acknowledging the conclusion of the electoral process, which stressed the need for an inclusive political process and reiterated the international community’s commitment to support Afghanistan. On 8 October, the mandate of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was extended by twelve months under resolution 1890.
2.5. Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK)

On 5 April, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) launched a missile, which according to DPRK statements only served to take a satellite into orbit, but which the international community considered to have been a long-range missile test. The UNSC reacted on 13 April by issuing a presidential statement in which it condemned the missile launch as a violation of resolution 1718 (2006). In response to the nuclear test conducted by the DPRK on 25 May, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1874 on 12 June in which it condemned this nuclear test in the strongest terms and demanded that the DPRK not conduct any further nuclear test or any launch using ballistic missile technology. Resolution 1874 extended the sanctions regime in place against the DPRK, including expanding the arms embargo and authorising inspections of all cargo to and from the DPRK as well as seizure and disposal of any sanctioned items found. Furthermore, resolution 1874 also mandates the competent sanctions committee with extending the sanctions regime to further entities, goods and individuals and to prepare a work programme that guarantees the full implementation of resolutions 1718 (2006) and 1874. Although the negotiations on resolution 1874 were mainly held among the five permanent members of the Security Council as well as Japan and the Republic of Korea as immediately affected parties, a passage calling on the DPRK to join the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty at the earliest possible date was included in the resolution at the initiative of Austria. Since the adoption of resolution 1874, UN Member States have reported four suspected cases of sanction violations to the Sanctions Committee.

2.6. Nepal

By adopting resolution 1864 on 23 January, the UNSC extended the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) in a reduced format for a period of six months. The Mission’s main task consisted of monitoring the management of arms and armed personnel of the former warring parties. Austria participated in the Mission by seconding two military observers in April. Resolution 1864 called upon all political parties in Nepal to expedite the peace process and requested that the UNSG prepare an interim report with a view to a further downsizing of UNMIN’s activities and a gradual drawdown and withdrawal of staff. The public debate in the UNSC on 5 May was dominated by the government crisis in Nepal following the resignation of Prime Minister Prachanda and the withdrawal of the Maoist Party from government. In a presidential statement, the UNSC called upon the Nepalese government and all political parties to continue cooperation and confirmed its support for the peace process. At an open briefing on 6 November, the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General in Nepal, Karin Landgren, pointed out that due to the lack of necessary progress in the peace process a termination of the Mission did not seem realistic. The major challenges in this regard are the
integration of Maoist fighters into the national army and the drafting of a federalist constitution. To this end, Austria organised a seminar for a high-level delegation of Nepalese constitutional law experts, held on 11 November in Vienna. On 23 July, resolution 1879 was adopted extending UNMIN’s mandate for a further six months after it had again become apparent that progress made in implementing the peace agreement was not sufficient as to allow a termination of UNMIN (as originally intended) in July.

2.7. Myanmar

On 20 February, the UNSC met for consultations with the Special Advisor to the UNSG on Myanmar, Ibrahim Gambari, who reported on his mission to Myanmar from 30 January to 3 February. In response to the arrest and arraignment fielded against Nobel Peace Prize laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 14 May, the UNSC issued a press statement on 22 May expressing its concern about the political impact of these developments and reaffirming the most important topics contained in its two previous statements on Myanmar of October 2007 and May 2008. During a public session held on 13 July, the UNSC informed the UNSC of the visit he had paid to Myanmar on 3 and 4 July. In response to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi being sentenced to a further 18 months of house arrest, the UNSC met for closed-door consultations on 11 August. In these consultations, Austria, together with the majority of the UNSC members, demanded the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners. On 13 August, the UNSC agreed on a press statement which reiterated the importance of the release of all political prisoners and expressed serious concern at the conviction of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and its political impact.

2.8. Timor-Leste

In an open debate on 19 February, in which Timorese President José Ramos-Horta participated, the UNSC Member States commented positively on the improvement of the security situation and the progress made by Timor-Leste in resolving the root causes of the problems that had led to the previous conflicts. On 26 February, the UNSC adopted resolution 1867 extending the mandate of the UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT) for a further twelve months. On 27 August, the UNSC Member States agreed, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the referendum on the independence of Timor-Leste on 30 August 1999, on elements for statements to the press acknowledging the efforts Timor-Leste had made towards peace, stability and development and commemorating the victims of the violence of 1999. In an open debate held on 23 October, the Head of UNMIT and Special Representative of the UNSG for Timor-Leste, Atul Khare, informed the UNSC about the situation on the ground. Khare referred to the positive developments and the peaceful conduct of the local elections of 9 October and stressed the need
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for building up further national capabilities to ensure the long-term stabilisation of Timor-Leste.

2.9. Sri Lanka

Reacting to the escalation of the armed conflict between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan armed forces, the UNSC dealt several times with the situation in Sri Lanka in the first half of the year. The system largely employed by the UNSC in this context were “informal discussions”, which had been co-initiated by Austria and enabled the UNSC to discuss the precarious humanitarian situation in Sri Lanka without having to put Sri Lanka formally on the SC agenda. During closed consultations held on 27 February, Under-Secretary-General John Holmes informed the UNSC about the trip he had taken to Sri Lanka from 19 to 21 February in his function as UN Emergency Relief Coordinator. He expressed grave concern regarding the fate of civilians trapped in the conflict zone, demanded their release by the LTTE and a temporary ceasefire. At the joint request of Austria, Costa Rica, Mexico, France and the United Kingdom and against the background of the further deterioration in the humanitarian situation on the ground, the UNSC held its first such “informal discussion” on 26 March, also attended by the Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka, in order to receive yet another report by USG Holmes. On 22 April, the UNSG’s Chief of Staff Vijay Nambiar, reported to the UNSC on the mediation mission he had embarked on from 16 to 17 April. In the course of this meeting, the SC Member States agreed on elements for press statements to be read out by the President of the Security Council demanding that the LTTE lay down its arms without further delay, that both sides abide by international humanitarian law and that access be facilitated for humanitarian aid workers. On 24 April, the SC Member States agreed on further elements for press statements calling upon the Sri Lankan government to grant all necessary support to a humanitarian team that had been dispatched by the UNSG to the conflict zone. On 30 April, USG Holmes again reported to the UNSC about yet another mission he had taken to Sri Lanka from 25 to 27 April. In a series of press elements read out by the President of the Security Council, the UNSC Member States confirmed their call upon the government to facilitate humanitarian access to the conflict zone. Following an informal meeting between ten UNSC Member States, numerous international NGOs and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a joint press conference on the situation in Sri Lanka was held by Federal Minister Spindelegger, the British Foreign Secretary David Miliband and the French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner in New York on 11 May. At this press conference, Federal Minister Spindelegger stressed the Sri Lankan government’s responsibility to protect its people, called for granting independent observers access to the camps for internally displaced people and emphasised the need for a political solution to the conflict. Based on the joint initiative of Austria, France and the UK, the UNSC on 13 May for the
first time agreed on a formal UNSC press statement on Sri Lanka, urgently demanding that both sides abide by international humanitarian law, insisting that the LTTE lay down its arms and that the government of Sri Lanka facilitate humanitarian access and evacuation of civilians. Moreover, the necessity of finding a long-term solution that addresses the needs of all communities in Sri Lanka was stressed. At an informal interactive discussion held on 5 June, after the end of fighting in Sri Lanka, the UNSG informed the UNSC about his trip to the country on 22 and 23 May. In this context, Austria underlined that it was imperative to improve the humanitarian situation in the camps for the internally displaced, conduct an independent investigation of the human rights violations and violations of international humanitarian law as well as to initiate a national reconciliation process.

2.10. Kosovo

Involving the participation of the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo, the UNSC dealt three times in total (23 March, 17 June and 15 October) with the UNSG’s reports on the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). The completion of the reconfiguration of UNMIK, reflecting the new situation after Kosovo’s unilateral declaration of independence and the subsequent handing-over of all tasks in the field of the rule of law, including police tasks, to the newly created EULEX KOSOVO resulted in a clear reduction of tasks for UNMIK. While the situation in Kosovo remained largely stable, only little progress was made with respect to practical cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo in the fields of justice, customs and cultural heritage.

2.11. Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 25 March, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1869, agreeing to the designation of the Austrian diplomat Ambassador Valentin Inzko as High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On 18 November, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1895 which extended the mandate of the EU’s multinational stabilisation force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) for a further twelve months starting from the date of the adoption of the resolution. In his capacity as High Representative, Ambassador Inzko reported on the latest developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the UNSC on 28 May and 23 November.

2.12. Georgia

The efforts made towards adapting the mandate – and thus the tasks – of the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) to the new situation following the conflict between Russia and Georgia in August 2008 failed on 15 June. The adoption of a draft resolution introduced by Austria together
with Croatia, France, Germany, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the USA, which had provided for a technical extension of the mandate by a few days to enable further negotiations on the future of UNOMIG was thwarted by the Russian Federation’s veto. Following its recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, a mandate based on the territorial integrity of Georgia had become unacceptable to the Russian Federation. The UN Mission, which had been established in 1993, was discontinued on 16 June. In their explanations of votes, numerous UNSC Member States, including Austria, expressed their regret about the Russian veto. After this decision had been taken there were no further deliberations on the situation in Georgia in the UNSC. A Geneva-based liaison facility headed by SGSR Johan Verbeke was set up to be able to continue the UN co-chair of the Geneva talks on security and stability and on the return of refugees and internally displaced persons as well as to participate in the regular meetings of the Incident Prevention und Response Mechanism.

2.13. Cyprus

The direct negotiations process launched on 3 September 2008 between the two ethnic group leaders Dimitris Christofias and Mehmet Ali Talat was continued. In April and in May as well as in a joint meeting in December, the Special Advisor of the SG on his Good Offices in Cyprus, Alexander Downer, and the Special Representative of the SG in Cyprus, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, reported to the UNSC on progress made in the negotiations and on the situation in Cyprus, which both described as stable and calm. The UNSC supported the ongoing negotiations and underlined the importance of confidence-building measures in order for progress to continue. By adopting resolution 1873 on 29 May and resolution 1898 on 14 December, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) unaltered by six months each until 15 June 2010. Although Turkey stated that it was in principle positive towards the UNFICYP presence on the island, it cast a negative vote in both cases. Turkey, which was thus the only Security Council Member to vote against the resolutions, argued that ever since the Mission’s establishment the UN had only sought approval of the Republic of Cyprus – but never that of the Turkish-Cypriot side.

2.14. Haiti

From 11 to 14 March, the UN undertook a mission to Haiti to determine progress made in implementing the mandate of the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and in particular of resolution 1840. In an open debate on Haiti on 6 April, the head of MINUSTAH, Hedi Annabi, briefed the SC on developments in the field of safety and security and the still fragile economic and social situation. Subsequently, the UNSC adopted a presidential statement on Haiti. On 19 May, the UNSC appointed former US President
Bill Clinton as UN Special Envoy for Haiti, entrusting him specifically with supporting efforts to start the country’s economic recovery and reconstruction. On 13 October, the UNSC adopted resolution 1892 extending the mandate of MINUSTAH by a further 12 months.

2.15. Africa

Conflicts on the African continent dominated the bulk of the UNSC’s work. For the first time, the UNSC was to deal in a comprehensive manner with the issue of piracy off the Somali coast. Its annual trip to Africa, from 14 to 21 May, took the UNSC to the headquarters of the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, to Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Liberia. In March, the UNSC held a high-level debate on peace and security in Africa, where the preparation of a report by the panel on enhancing cooperation between the AU and the UN, headed by Romano Prodi, was welcomed.

2.15.1. Sudan

As had been the case last year, Sudan played a central role in the deliberations within the UNSC. Both the humanitarian and the security situations remained difficult. On 4 March, the ICC’s Pre-Trial Chamber confirmed application 143 for a warrant of arrest to be issued against Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir. The AU and the League of Arab States (Arab League, AL) advocated a suspension of the warrant for arrest against President Bashir according to Article 16 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. Under these provisions the UNSC may, in individual cases and for political reasons, defer an investigation or prosecution for a period of 12 months. But in the case of President Bashir, the majority support required to pass such a deferral resolution has as yet not been reached in the UNSC. One day after the warrant for arrest had been issued, Sudan ordered 13 international humanitarian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to cease their activities in Darfur, resulting in a prolonged further deterioration of the humanitarian situation on the ground. The mandate of the African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) was extended by a further twelve months until 31 July 2010 under resolution 1881. However, the implementation of the mandate remains difficult owing to the cross-border conflict with Chad and the associated problems in Sudanese cooperation and the fact that after two years there is still a lack of sufficient numbers and operational capability amongst the authorised troops. On the initiative of Austria, the explicit demand for respect of human rights and international humanitarian law was included in the text of the resolution. Under resolution 1870 of 30 April, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) for another year. Within its current mandate, UNMIS is to continue to provide assistance in the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and in conducting the elections scheduled for February 2010. Austria
particularly advocated that UNMIS make full use of its mandate and capabilities to provide security for the civilian population and complete its work on “the comprehensive strategy on the protection of civilians” in a timely manner. In 2009, the Sudan Sanctions Committee, established under resolution 1591 (2005) and chaired by Austria, continued to monitor the sanctions regime in Darfur, which includes an arms embargo and targeted sanctions (travel ban and asset freeze) against individuals designated by the Committee. A substantial result of the Committee’s activities was the drafting of general guidelines to enhance cooperation and information-sharing between the expert panels set up by the UNSC and the relevant UN peacekeeping operations. These guidelines are of relevance for a number of sanctions committees in which each respective experts group collaborates closely with peacekeeping operations.

2.15.2. Chad/Central African Republic
The security situation in the border region between Chad and the Central African Republic (CAR) remained tense. On 14 January, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1861 on the situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion, thus extending the mandate of the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) until 15 March 2010 and expanding it by a military component which took over the tasks of the EUFOR presence in the region on 15 March (re-hatting). The UNSC authorised a multidimensional presence in Chad and a military presence in the CAR intended to help create the security conditions conducive to the voluntary, secure and sustainable return of refugees and internally displaced persons. MINURCAT is to contribute to the protection of refugees and internally displaced persons, facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance and create favourable conditions for reconstruction and economic and social development.

2.15.3. Eritrea
On 10 June 2008, fighting erupted at the border between Eritrea and Djibouti. Subsequent to this incident the UNSC adopted resolution 1862 on 14 January demanding that Eritrea withdraw its forces from the border region with Djibouti and engage in efforts in securing the peaceful resolution of its border dispute with Djibouti. Reacting to Eritrea’s support for armed insurgents in Somalia and its refusal to resolve its border conflict with Djibouti, the UNSC imposed sanctions against Eritrea under resolution 1907 of 23 December. These sanctions include a ban on arms exports and imports as well as targeted sanctions (travel ban, arms embargo and financial sanctions) against individuals and entities still to be designated. Instead of creating a new sanctions committee charged with the designation of such individuals or entities and monitoring the sanctions against Eritrea, the UNSC resolved to expand the mandate of the 751 Committee (Somalia).
2.15.4. Somalia

Under resolution 1863 of 16 January and resolution 1872 of 26 May, the UNSC extended the authorisation of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) by six months each. Adopting resolution 1872, the UNSC approved of the provision of a logistical UN support package for AMISOM. In the relevant deliberations, Austria successfully supported strengthening the human rights perspective at the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS).

Under resolution 1897, the UNSC extended the authorisation of activities to suppress piracy off the Somali coast for another year. In its capacity as holder of the Presidency of the UN Security Council, Austria organised a public debate on piracy off the Somali coast on 18 November. Together with the UNSC members, states and organisations that are either directly affected by piracy or contribute to the counter-piracy activities participated in the debate in the course of which the Swedish EU Council Presidency also reported on the EU Mission ATALANTA.

2.15.5. Burundi

Under resolution 1902 of 17 December, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) by twelve months until 31 December 2010. The UNSC welcomed progress made by Burundi in key peace consolidation areas and the establishment of the Independent National Electoral Commission, which BINUB is to support in its work. The government of Burundi was called upon to increase its efforts in the field of protection of human rights, create an environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections in 2010 and to guarantee the independence of the newly established Independent National Electoral Commission. Furthermore, the government of Burundi, with the support of BINUB, was called upon to establish a national Independent Human Rights Commission.

2.15.6. Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In the course of its trip to Africa, the UNSC on 18 and 19 May also paid a visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, attaching particular attention to the situation in East Congo. During its visit, the UNSC mission handed over to the state leadership of the DRC a list giving the names of five members of the DRC’s armed forces who are accused of particularly grave and systematic sexual crimes against women and requesting their criminal prosecution.

Under resolution 1906 of 23 December, the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) by five months until 31 May 2010, and expressed its intention to extend it further by another twelve months until 31 May 2011 – based on the UNSG’s recommendations on the reconfiguration of MONUC’s mandate. The protection of civilians continues to take top priority under the Mission’s mandate. In the pertinent negotiations, Austria successfully advocated the inclusion of rel-
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relevant provisions of resolution 1894 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, introduced by Austria, which resulted in a significant strengthening of the mandate of MONUC.

The former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, who was appointed Special Envoy on the Great Lakes Region by the UNSG in 2008, informed the UNSC in November that owing to the substantial progress achieved in the political process in the region and the approximation between the DRC and its neighbours he was resigning from his mandate. On 30 November, the UNSC adopted resolution 1896 extending the sanctions regime directed at the DRC as well as the mandate of the Sanction Committee’s Group of Experts until 30 November 2010. The resolution extends the Sanction Committee’s mandate by including the preparation of guidelines relating to the listing and notification of sanctioned individuals and entities and empowers the Group of Experts to produce guidelines for the exercise of due diligence by the importers, processing industries and consumers of mineral products regarding the purchase, sourcing, acquisition and processing of mineral products from the DRC.

2.15.7. Côte d’Ivoire

Under resolutions 1865 and 1880 the UNSC extended the mandate of the UN Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) by six months until 31 January 2010. UNOCI’s troop level was reduced by one battalion; any further substantial drawdown will depend on clear progress made in the implementation of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement of March 2007. In a presidential statement issued on 8 December, the UNSC expressed its concern over the new postponement of the presidential elections scheduled for 29 November, but also acknowledged the substantial progress made in the preparations for the elections. Under resolution 1893 of 29 October, the UNSC extended the sanctions concerning the trading in arms and diamonds in Côte d’Ivoire until 31 October 2010.

2.15.8. Liberia

On 15 September, the UNSC adopted resolution 1885 extending the mandate of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) until 30 September 2010. The resolution extends the scope of the mandate by authorising UNMIL to assist the Liberian government with the 2011 elections. The drawdown phase adopted in 2008 was completed in 2009, and any further drawdown phases were postponed until further notice. In connection with the final report by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Austria advocated support for setting up an Independent National Human Rights Commission. On 17 December, the UNSC adopted resolution 1903 extending the sanctions against Liberia. The travel ban and the asset freeze for persons associated with Charles Taylor
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were extended for another twelve months, while the UNSC lifted the arms embargo against the Liberian government.

2.15.9. Sierra Leone
UNSC resolution 1886 of 15 September extended the mandate of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) by twelve months until 30 September 2010. The mission is mandated with continuing to support, in close cooperation with the UN country team, the government of Sierra Leone in resolving conflicts, promoting human rights and implementing reforms in the field of good governance. The resolution also calls upon the UNSG to develop a set of benchmarks for the transition of UNIPSIL into a UN Country Team presence, which could replace the Integrated Office after the 2012 elections.

2.15.10. Guinea-Bissau
On 26 June, the UNSC adopted resolution 1876 establishing a United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) beginning on 1 January 2010 and terminating at the same time the mandate for the current UN Peacebuilding-Support Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNOGBIS). The new Mission’s mandate covers an initial period of twelve months until 31 December 2010. UNIOGBIS is mandated with assisting the government in Guinea-Bissau in building up capacities, reforming the security sector, combating drug trafficking, promoting human rights and reforms in the field of good governance as well as supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in Guinea-Bissau.

2.15.11. Western Sahara
In January, Christopher Ross was appointed Personal Envoy of the UNSG for Western Sahara. Austria actively supported Ross’ efforts towards a resumption of the peace talks between Morocco and Polisario. At the invitation of Austria, the two parties held their first informal talks since the Manhasset negotiation round of March 2008 in Dürnstein in August. These talks were also attended by representatives of Algeria and Mauretania. On 30 April, the UNSC adopted resolution 1871 extending the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) by twelve months. In the negotiations leading up to the resolution, Austria successfully advocated inter alia the inclusion of explicit recognition of the importance of making progress on the human dimension of the conflict as a means of promoting mutual confidence-building and constructive dialogue among the parties.

3. Nuclear Disarmament and Nuclear Non-Proliferation
The first Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament at the Heads of State and Government level convened on 24 Sep-
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tember. US President Barack Obama chaired the meeting, at which Federal President Fischer and Federal Minister Spindelegger represented Austria. In his address, Federal President Fischer stressed Austria’s support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention and emphasised that nuclear-weapons-states must further reduce their arsenals, a process for the entry into force of the Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty must be devised, and that multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle under the control of the IAEA represented a valuable confidence-building measure. As the outcome of the summit, the unanimously adopted resolution 1887 was acknowledged as being an important contribution towards creating a nuclear-arms-free world. The resolution calls upon all states that are not yet Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to accede to the Treaty, calls upon all states to refrain from nuclear test explosions and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The disarmament conference also calls for negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), expresses its concern over current challenges to the non-proliferation regime (Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) and calls for observance of the sanctions resolutions already in force. It calls upon all states to adopt stricter export controls on sensitive material in the nuclear fuel cycle and encourages the IAEA Board of Governors to soon put in place the necessary measures for multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. Austria contributed actively to the negotiations in the lead-up to the adoption of the resolution and succeeded in ensuring that, besides incorporating important disarmament measures despite some resistance, the UNSC’s statements on the promotion of peaceful use of nuclear energy explicitly referred exclusively to those states that seek to maintain and develop this type of energy, pointing furthermore to the need for the highest international standards for safeguards, security and safety to be adhered to.

4. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

As one of the priorities of Austria’s work in the UNSC, the protection of civilians, particularly of women and children also figured prominently on its agenda during its Presidency of the UNSC. On 11 November, the UNSC, presided over by Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger, unanimously adopted resolution 1894 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which had been co-sponsored by a total of 31 UN Member States. The resolution had been drafted by Austria and negotiated with the other UNSC Member States. Resolution 1894 aims on the one hand to improve compliance of parties to armed conflict with international standards for the protection of civilians, and at the same time defines very concrete measures aimed at guaranteeing a more effective implementation of the UN peacekeeping missions’ protection mandate by developing an operational concept for the protection of civilians and mission-wide protection strategies. The open UNSC debate on
11 November focused on strengthening the implementation of the protection of civilians in areas relating to respect of obligations under international law, enhancing implementation of the protection of civilians’ mandates by peacekeeping operations and improving the flow of information to the UNSC. Apart from the UNSG, the Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights Kyung-wha Kang and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief John Holmes, a total of 63 UN Member States participated in the debate.

5. Human Rights of Women

Under the Presidency of US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, the UNSC on 30 September unanimously adopted resolution 1888 dealing with sexual violence against women in armed conflict, which, building on resolution 1820 (2008), focuses on strengthening measures towards fighting sexual violence against women in armed conflict by inter alia appointing a Special Representative of the UNSG. Resolution 1889, which was adopted only a few days later on 5 October under the Vietnamese Presidency, places special focus on enhanced consideration of the priorities of girls and women in post-conflict situations and in peacebuilding activities. In the negotiations on both resolutions and in the open UNSC debates on 10 August and 31 October, Austria supported an end to impunity for perpetrators, more effective accountability mechanisms and more systematic reporting to the UNSC.

6. Children and Armed Conflict

Chaired by Mexico, the annual Open UNSC Debate on Children and Armed Conflict took place on 29 April. Deliberations focused on the UNSG’s proposal to include on the “black lists” not only those parties to armed conflict who were guilty of recruiting child soldiers, but also those who killed, maimed or used sexual violence against children in the context of armed conflict. Inclusion on the “black lists” triggers a UN monitoring and reporting mechanism. Austria supported this call by the UNSG. Although the presidential statement adopted on 29 April recognises the importance of expanding the criteria to include the crimes named by the UNSG, no decision was taken on the issue due to lack of agreement among the UNSC members. Subsequently, Austria undertook active efforts towards expanding the relevant criteria by way of a resolution. On 4 August, the UNSC unanimously adopted resolution 1882, introduced by Mexico, which now included the required expansion of the relevant criteria by the crimes of killing, maiming and sexual violence against children, thus broadening the system in place to protect children in armed conflict. Austria, moreover, succeeded in its efforts to have the topics of enhanced communication between the UNSC Working
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Group and relevant sanctions committees as well as strengthening the fight against impunity included in the resolution.

In 2009, the UNSC Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict dealt with seven country-specific reports from the UNSG on the situation of children in armed conflict (Burundi, Central African Republic, Colombia, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda). Furthermore, conclusions and recommendations were adopted with respect to six country situations (Afghanistan, Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar and Sudan) in which the respective parties to the conflict were urged to stop the crimes they were committing against children, fight impunity and develop concrete action plans to discharge child soldiers from the armed forces.

7. Countering Terrorism

In the UNSC, the issue of countering terrorism is dealt with by three subsidiary bodies: the 1373 Counter-Terrorism Committee, the 1267 Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee and the 1540 Committee to Combat the Proliferation of Nuclear, Chemical and Biological Weapons. On 1 January, Austria took over the chair of the 1267 Al-Qaida and Taliban Sanctions Committee. The Committee maintains a Consolidated List of more than 500 individuals, organisations, undertakings and entities, which in the view of the UNSC are associated with Al-Qaida or Taliban. The Committee is assisted by a monitoring team. The individuals, organisations, undertaking and entities included in the list are subject to restrictive measures (freezing of assets/economic resources, travel restrictions) and an arms embargo. The main task of the Austrian Committee Presidency consisted in implementing resolution 1822 (2008), which provides for a general review by the Committee by 30 June 2010 of all names (set out at the time of the adoption of resolution 1822) in the Consolidated List and the publication of a narrative stating the reasons for each of these entries in this list. In the period under review, 80 entries in the list were reviewed, resulting in the deletion of nine entries (five individuals, four organisations).

The year 2009 was characterised by an increasingly heated public debate on the most appropriate ways and means of ensuring that measures taken under the 1267 regime were fully in line with the obligation to protect fundamental rights. The European Court of Justice in particular has been demanding in ever clearer terms that EU institutions with responsibility for implementing UNSC sanctions resolutions with effect for all EU Member States within the EU observe basic rule of law principles and rules of procedure and in this context also focuses on respect for these principles by the UNSC itself. Against this background and on the initiative of Austria, a delegation from the 1267 Committee visited the EU institutions in Brussels.

The adoption of resolution 1904 on 17 December enabled the further improvement of the 1267 procedures. The creation of the function of an independent
Ombudsperson, which is based on an Austrian initiative, to whom indi-
viduals, groups, undertakings and entities seeking to be removed from the Con-
solidated List can submit their request for delisting and who will assist them 
in their relevant efforts, represented an important contribution to improving 
the rules of procedure.

8. Combating Drugs

In an open debate held on 8 December, the UNSC considered the topic of 
“drug trafficking as a threat to international security”, placing special focus 
on the situation in West Africa. A presidential statement adopted in the 
debate describes drug trafficking as in some situations posing a threat to 
international security, recognises the important role the individual UN bod-
ies and UNODC play in countering drug trafficking and calls upon the UNSG 
to make the fight against drug trafficking an integral factor of conflict pre-
vention strategies, both when conducting conflict analyses as well as in UN 
mission assessments and peace building support activities. Austria made use 
of this debate to also advocate in particular the strengthening of the Vienna-
based UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). The Executive Director of 
UNODC, Antonio Maria Costa, also participated in the debate.

9. Working Group on International Tribunals

On 1 January, Austria took over the chair of the Informal UNSC Working 
Group on International Tribunals. The main task of this Working Group con-
sists in preparing the establishment of an institution (mechanism to address 
residual issues, or “residual mechanism”) which is to assume the functions 
of the Yugoslavia and Rwanda tribunals following the conclusion of their 
proceedings. After having discussed numerous functions in the first half of 
the year, the Working Group in summer considered the report by the UNSG 
which analyses potential functions and structures of as well as possible 
locations for the residual mechanism and contains recommendations to the 
UNSC and the tribunals. Based on that, the Austrian chair prepared a draft 
resolution for the establishment of a residual mechanism in the second half 
of the year, whose first reading was completed in December. With a view to 
enhancing the transparency of the Working Group and promoting a broad-
based discussion on the residual mechanism, the Austrian representation 
organised an “Arria formula” meeting between the UNSC and the presidents 
of the two tribunals in October. The Working Group also drafted resolutions 
1877, 1878, 1900 and 1901, which were introduced by Austria.

10. Peacekeeping Operations

At the beginning of the year, 18 peacekeeping operations were in place for 
which 120 states contributed personnel. UNOMIG was terminated on 16 June
after Russia had vetoed the extension of its mandate in the related discussion. UNMIK was drawn down to a minimum after having handed over all tasks in the field of the rule of law, including police tasks, to the newly created EULEX KOSOVO. MINURCAT, on the other hand, was extended by a military component after expiry of the ESDP operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA. By the end of the year, the military and police personnel deployed totalled 98,114 (31 December 2008: 91,712). The largest operations were MONUC (20,255 personnel), UNAMID (19,588 personnel), UNIFIL (12,133 personnel) and UNMIL (11,347 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 remains a substantial need for armed troops equipped with appropriate protective gear.

Reacting to the fact that the UN were increasingly reaching capacity limits due to the rise in peacekeeping demands, a **process to reform peacekeeping operations**, initiated by France and the United Kingdom, was launched in January. The main goals pursued by this process are improving the strategic overall approach, providing solutions to managing the scarcity of resources, and preparing a compilation of the lessons learned in implementing past and current mandates in order to avoid a discrepancy between the mandate and its actual implementation. The efforts towards reforms are also supported by the re-activated UNSC Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, which is used as a forum for dialogue between the UNSC members, the UN Secretariat and the troop and police providing countries. In parallel, the UN Secretariat presented its own ideas for reform in a document entitled “New Horizon for Peacekeeping”. In its contributions to the debate, Austria focused particularly on improving the exchange of information between the UN, the countries seconding troops and the respective parties.

In 2009, the **Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations** dealt primarily with further developing and strengthening the 2008 recommendations on peacebuilding activities in post-conflict situations, on the safety and security of UN personnel, improvement of the UN’s capabilities, and the “African peacekeeping capabilities” as well as cooperation between the UN and regional organisations, especially the AU. From the Austrian point of view, the fact that the Committee recommended a strengthening of UN Secretariat capacities in the fields of policing, rule of law and security sector reform and for the first time decided to carry out an in-depth consideration of mandates to protect civilians in peacekeeping operations, is to be considered as progress. Austria primarily advocated measures aimed at improving the safety and security of personnel in UN peacekeeping operations, enhancing cooperation in investigations as well as improving exchange of information between the UN, the countries seconding troops and the relevant parties.

At the end of the year, 402 Austrians (391 soldiers and 11 military observers) were serving in six UN peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, 441 Austrians were deployed as part of the peacekeeping mission in Kosovo (KFOR) led
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by NATO and authorised by the UNSC. By the end of 2009, three Austrians participated in the – UNSC authorised – NATO-led ISAF mission in Afghanistan, and 134 Austrians were deployed as part of the EU-led operation in Bosnia und Herzegovina (EUFOR-Althea). Furthermore, 170 members of the Austrian armed forces participated in the EU-led operation in the Central African Republic and Chad (EUFOR Tchad/RCA) at the time its tasks were transferred to the UN operation MINURCAT in March. 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 Ireland) to UN-led missions and peacekeeping operations, thus occupying rank 37 among the 115 troop-contributing UN Member States.

11. The Reform Debate

The debate on a reform of the UNSC that has been ongoing for several years was raised to a new level with the start of intergovernmental negotiations in February. However, owing to lack of consensus no substantial progress was achieved with respect to the main issues – membership categories, veto, regional representation, number of members in an expanded Security Council, Security Council working methods and relations between the Security Council and the General Assembly. Concrete steps towards reform were mainly thwarted by disagreement between UN Member States on expanding the UNSC by new permanent members. Neither was any progress made with respect to a potential “interim solution” involving a new category of “longer-term members”.

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 intergovernmental 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 to assist them in post-conflict peacebuilding, recovery, reconstruction and development in order to avoid relapse into a renewed conflict by helping to bridge the frequently identified gaps between the end of a peacekeeping operation and the beginning of effective development cooperation efforts. On 30 June, the PBC completed its third session and adopted its third annual report. Immediately afterwards, the PBC opened its fourth session period. In its third year, the PBC succeeded in strengthening its role as advisor and in providing more efficient support to the countries on its agenda (Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Central African Republic). The PBC’s country specific formats and the visits it paid to the countries on its agenda contributed substantially to a stronger focus on results in the PBC’s work. In July, Austria became a member of the country
specific configuration for Sierra Leone and contributed proactively to the relevant meetings. The PBC’s founding resolution provides for a review of its arrangements within five years of its establishment, which is thus to be completed by the end of the 64th General Assembly in summer 2010. After consultation with the UNSC, the President of the General Assembly appointed Ireland and South Africa as well as the current UNSC Member State Mexico as co-facilitators for this review process.

V. The Economic and Social Council

1. General Information

The Working Session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) was held in Geneva from 6 to 30 July. The Session’s high-level segment focused on the development policy aspects of global public health. In a Ministerial Declaration, Member States reconfirmed the Millennium Declaration and committed themselves to implementing particularly those three Millennium Development Goals that directly relate to improving health (Millennium Development Goal 4: reduce child mortality; Millennium Development Goal 5: improve maternal health; Millennium Development Goal 6: combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases). At the Annual Ministerial Review meeting, eight countries (Bolivia, China, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Japan, Mali, Sri Lanka and Sudan) presented their efforts towards combating poverty. Following up on the 2008 high-level segment, the coordination segment focused on the role played by the UN system in promoting sustainable development. The operational activities segment discussed ways and means for the UN development system to most effectively support developing countries in implementing their national priorities and achieving internationally recognised development goals. The general segment considered the reports prepared by the ECOSOC special commissions and expert groups.

2. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is one of the five Geneva-based UN regional commissions. The organisation aims to promote economic cooperation among Member States by defining standards and technical cooperation in as diverse areas as transport, environment, energy, trade or statistics.

On 2 September, Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger visited the Executive Secretary of UNECE Ján Kubiš. Austria supports UNECE in areas such as energy-efficient housing construction, issues relating to the ageing society, Trans-European Road Network and Trans-European Rail Network projects and the environment.
VI. The International Court of Justice

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the only international court of a universal nature and with general jurisdiction. All 192 Member States of the United Nations are parties to its Statute and 66 have accepted the ICJ’s compulsory jurisdiction in accordance with Article 36 Paragraph 2 of its Statute. Currently 14 cases are pending before the Court.

In January, the International Court of Justice found that the USA has breached the obligations incumbent upon it under the Order Indicating Provisional Measures by executing one Mexican national. All further submissions by Mexico were rejected. In February, the ICJ determined the delimitation of the maritime border in the Black Sea between Romania and Ukraine, finding that about 80 per cent of the 12,400 km² large controversial area belonged to Romania. In May, the ICJ rejected Belgium’s request for the indication of provisional measures, finding that the risk of irreparable prejudice by Senegal to the rights claimed by Belgium was not apparent and that there was no immediate urgency to justify the indication of provisional measures by the Court. In July, the ICJ ruled that Costa Rica had comprehensive rights of use in the San Juan River and found that Nicaragua had in several instances violated the Border Treaty of 1858. Regarding the accordance with international law of the unilateral declaration of independence by Kosovo, Austria submitted a written statement in April and participated in the hearings in December.

VII. The United Nations Specialised Agencies and Related Organisations

1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO)

In an effort to meet the pressing challenges of combating poverty and hunger in today’s world, the FAO organised a high-level World Summit on Food Security held in Rome from 16 to 18 November. In the final declaration, which was unanimously adopted, the Heads of State and Government reaffirmed their commitment to meeting Millennium Development Goal 1 (eradicate extreme poverty and hunger) and pledged to increase the agricultural share of development assistance. From the organisational point of view, the Committee for World Food Security was given a central role to play as an international platform for worldwide food security.

The 36th session of the FAO Conference convened from 18 to 23 November and nominated and elected the FAO Council Members for the period 2009 to 2013 and elected Luc Guyau as new Independent Chairperson of the Council. Furthermore, the budget and the scale of mandatory membership contributions for the 2010 – 2011 financial period were adopted.
At the Third Session of the Governing Board of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), held in Tunis from 1 to 5 June, Austria was elected as chair, which is of particular significance as the UN had designated 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.

The World Food Day, proclaimed by the FAO every year on 16 October, was dedicated to “Achieving Food Security in Times of Crisis”. In this context, the FMEIA and the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management together with two further co-organisers hosted an international panel discussion on 8 October. The event, in which the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food and a high-level FAO representative participated, attracted much interest.

2. International Labour Organisation (ILO)

Austria is a full member of the Administrative Council of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for the period from 2008–2011. The global financial and economic crisis was the predominant topic dealt with by the ILO, which specifically stressed the resulting jobs crisis. From 15 to 17 June, the ILO held a Summit on the Global Jobs Crisis where national and international responses to the prevalent crisis were discussed. At the International Labour Conference (ILC), held from 3 to 19 June, the Global Jobs Pact was adopted as a guideline for measures aimed at stimulating the economy, creating jobs and protecting those members of the labour force who are most affected by the crisis. The “Global Jobs Pact“ was widely recognised at the G20 Summit in Pittsburgh where it was welcomed by the Heads of State and Government present, who stressed their readiness to undertake efforts towards safeguarding and creating jobs.

3. International Telecommunications Union (ITU)

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.

The fourth annual Meeting of the Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was held in Sharm El Sheikh from 15 to 18 November and focused on the challenges posed by new technologies. With its highest membership number since its establishment, the IGF provided impressive proof of its further evolution. The Forum did not restrict itself to dealing with issues relating exclusively to internet governance (international administration of domains) but also focused on topics such as development, human rights, protection of privacy, Internet access and safe use of the Internet particularly in dealing with social
networks. In comprehensive deliberations, participants reached a broad consensus on continuing the IGF as an open platform for dialogue with multi-stakeholder character, at least for the next five years, also due to the fact that consensus is unlikely to be reached if this wide range of issues were to be dealt with in any other way within the UN.

4. **International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)**

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 developing countries who can thus be granted loans with 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 32 years, IFAD funded roughly 808 projects involving a total value of 10.8 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 (ICAO)**

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.

On 1 August, Raymond Benjamin (France) became ICAO Secretary General for a period of three years. Since 1 July, Christian Schleifer of Austria has been a member of the ICAO Air Navigation Commission which is composed of independent experts from the states party to ICAO and must be heard on all technical matters. Following the High-Level meeting on Climate Change held in Montreal from 7 to 9 October, progress was made in defining emission targets for the aviation sector. The need for limiting aviation-induced greenhouse gas emissions in the medium-term and reducing them in the long-term is gaining ground among states and within the aviation industry.


On 15 November, Irina Bokova from Bulgaria followed outgoing Koichiro Matsuura (Japan) as Director General of UNESCO being the first woman to hold this office and the first representative of the Eastern European country group to head the Organisation. Her mandate covers a period of four years.
In spite of intensive efforts it had not been possible to achieve a sufficient number of votes in the General Conference in favour of the candidacy of Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Austrian EU Commissioner for External Relations and Neighbourhood Policy, which meant that Benita Ferrero-Waldner withdrew her candidacy after the third ballot.

The General Conference adopted the new two-year programme and the budget for the years 2010–2011 amounting to 653 million US dollars, equaling a nominal increase of 3.5 per cent. Education remains the top priority with an allocated budget of 118.5 million US dollars. The budget funds made available for scientific programmes amount to 89 million US dollars, while 53 million US dollars were earmarked for culture and 33 million US dollars for information and communication.

In line with the rotation principle, elections were held for half of the 58 Members of the Executive Council and all of the subsidiary committees. Austria’s membership in the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme was confirmed. Austria was also elected to the Intergovernmental Bioethics Committee (IGBC) and the Intergovernmental Council of the MOST Programme (Management of Social Transformations). Austria also continues to be represented on the Intergovernmental Committee for Physical Education and Sport (CIGEPS) and in the Information for All Programme (IFAP).

In the field of education, the following international conferences were held: the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development in Bonn at the end of March, the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris from 6 to 8 July and the International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in Belem (Brazil). The Austrian delegation to the 35th UNESCO General Conference, which convened from 7 to 23 October, was headed by Federal Minister Claudia Schmied.

The entry into force of the Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage marked an important step towards preservation of the tangible cultural heritage. Progress was also made with respect to the implementation of the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In its meeting from 15 to 18 June, the Second Conference of States Parties adopted operational guidelines for the Convention’s implementation.

### 7. World Health Organisation (WHO)

At the 62nd World Health Assembly, held in Geneva from 18 to 22 May, it was possible to grant Taiwan observer status for the first time by designating it – based on an agreement between the People’s Republic of China and Taiwan – as “Department of Health, Chinese Taipei“. The meeting’s dominant thematic topic was the new flu strain (H1N1), which also figured promi-
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nently in the specific resolutions adopted. Other issues dealt with by the specific resolutions included strengthening primary health care systems at all levels and the interrelation between the protection of trademark and intellectual property rights and the promotion of innovation as well as access to medicines for the treatment of poverty-related diseases.

At the meeting of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe (Copenhagen, 14 to 17 September) the then Director of the Stockholm-based European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, Zsuzsanna Jakab (Hungary), was designated as new Director of the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen whose five year term in office will start in 2010.

8. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1957 and is an autonomous organisation within the United Nations System. The Agency’s principal task is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to verify adherence to the commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The review of the Iranian nuclear programme by the IAEA again met with substantial public interest. After Iran had announced that it was constructing a second enrichment facility, the IAEA Governing Board adopted a resolution in November calling upon Iran to observe all its obligations and informed the UNSC about the recent developments.

Likewise in November, the Governing Board approved the conclusion of a Fuel Reserve Agreement between the IAEA and the Russian Federation. Austria hopes that this agreement on the establishment of a fuel reserve will lead to further steps towards a multilateralisation of the nuclear fuel cycle, ensuring that the use of nuclear technologies is subject to the direct control of the IAEA and hence the strictest provisions for safety, security and non-proliferation.

Peace Nobel Prize laureate Mohamed ElBaradei (Egypt) terminated his twelve year term in office as IAEA Director General and was conferred with the Grand Decoration of Honour in Gold with Sash by Federal President Fischer for his services. ElBaradei was succeeded by the Japanese diplomat Yukiya Amano, who took office as Director General in December.

9. World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO)

The Madrid-based World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, serving as a forum for global tourism policy issues and 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, of which it held the chair for the
The Regional Commission for Europe (CEU) held its 49th Session in Baku from 24 to 26 March and met for its 50th Session in Astana on the margins of the XVIIIth General Assembly. The General Debate of the XVIIIth General Assembly, held in Astana from 5 to 8 October, dealt with the effects of the international economic crisis on tourism and potential measures to counter its impact. The General Assembly also appointed the new UNWTO Secretary-General, Taleb Rifai from Jordan, for the 2010 to 2013 period and approved of his plans for reform of the organisation. Together with the UNWTO, the Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth and Statistics Austria organised working meetings and seminars in Vienna on improving the South Eastern European and Central Asian countries’ tourism statistics.

10. Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Established in 1874, the Universal Postal Union (UPU) is the oldest international organisation beside the ITU. Austria has been a member of the UPU since its foundation. The Universal Postal Union regulates international postal traffic and recommends measures to increase postal volumes as well as to improve the quality of postal services. The UPU also acts as advisor, consultative body, mediator and link. The central body for assigning Internet names and addresses, the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority, in whose consultative committee of governments Austria plays an active role, assigned the top level domain “.post” to the UPU, which is now responsible for assigning the second level domains.

11. International Maritime Organisation (IMO)

The London-based International Maritime Organisation (IMO) comprises 169 Member States. Austria joined the IMO in 1975. In its 26th session, held from 23 November to 2 December, the IMO Assembly dealt primarily with issues relating to safety and environmental aspects of navigation, also focusing on the still pressing problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia on which it adopted a resolution. Other items on the session’s agenda included the flag state audit, new guidelines for ships operating in polar waters, and the IMO’s High-Level Action Plan for 2010 und 2011. In the elections for the IMO Council held on 27 November during the session of the IMO Assembly, the current members for Category A and Category B were confirmed; in Category C all EU Members States candidacies were successful.

12. World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

The Third World Climate Conference was held in Geneva from 31 August to 4 September. Austria was represented by a delegation headed by Federal
Minister Johannes Hahn. The conference’s most important outcome was the adoption of a resolution on the establishment of a global network for sharing climate information and services (Global Framework for Climate Services, GFCS), that aims to strengthen the preparation, accessibility, transfer and application of knowledge-based climate forecasts and services and is to be set up by 2011.
D. The Legal and Consular Dimension of Austrian Foreign Policy

I. General Legal and Consular Issues

One of the most important functions of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is its provision of 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. This includes not only consular assistance provided in individual cases but also measures for the protection of Austrians in the event of crisis or disaster. Assistance is usually provided through the local embassies and consulates, with the competent authorities of the country in question being called in if necessary. If there is no Austrian diplomatic representation in a particular country, the local representation 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 and – since 1 December – Article 23 TFEU, respectively).

Adjustments to modifications in the Fees Act of 1957 became effective on 1 January 2010 with the entry into force of the Amendment to the Consular Fees Act (governing fees due on application for residence titles, fee exemptions for minutes and copies when being granted Austrian citizenship, fee reductions for IDs for individuals aged 16 and under). This Amendment also provides for new regulations relating to the obligation of affected individuals to reimburse the Austrian representations abroad for expenses incurred by the latter in connection with actions taken to protect Austrian nationals abroad. Furthermore, official acts relating to victims of persecution until 1945 are generally exempted from payment of consular fees, and fees due for official acts required to be performed outside of the Austrian representations’ office hours were amended.

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 difficulties while abroad. In the event of consular emergencies abroad, FMEIA staff can be reached around the clock by phone on +43 50 11 50 ext. 4411. On average, more than 1,200 callers a month dial this telephone number to seek assistance. On +43 50 11–3775 or +43 50 11–3900 FMEIA staff will also help callers with questions relating to travel information and give general information on the granting of visas, the procurement of documents from abroad, certifications and official procedures, etc. Altogether, an average of 3,400 calls are
made to these three telephone numbers per month, reaching around 5,000 calls per month at peak times.

While in 2007 the number of holiday and business trips made by citizens who have their principal residence in Austria amounted to 7,527,800, this number rose to 10,121,000 trips in 2009. Including the day trips abroad that are not covered by such statistics, the number of trips to foreign countries undertaken by individuals who have their permanent residence in Austria came to a total of around 13.5 million. (Source: Statistics Austria: Holiday and Business Trips during Calendar Year 2009).

The growing volume of foreign travel undertaken by Austrian citizens is also reflected in the increased use of consular support in cases of sickness, accident or death abroad. Consequently, the number of cases involving the provision of support for mentally unstable or sick Austrian citizens in a foreign country or the repatriation of such individuals from abroad also rose. All in all, the financial means made available to assist Austrian nationals in emergencies or serious difficulties abroad amounted to approx. 240,000 euros.

Thanks to the high level of awareness of official travel advice provided on the FMEIA website (www.aussenministerium.at), which serves as an objective source of information for those travelling to foreign countries, the website recorded up to 500,000 visits per month. In this context, the Ministry attaches particular importance to the assessment of security conditions in certain countries and updates the relevant information on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the Austrian representations abroad and Austria’s partners within the European Union.

At the Open Day on 26 October, the Citizens’ Help Desk presented the Security and Emergency Card, the travel information provided on the FMEIA website and the range of assistance available through the Citizens’ Help Desk as well as the Austrian representations abroad.

2. Crisis Prevention and Crisis Management

2.1. The National Dimension

Natural disasters, terrorist attacks and civil wars all clearly demonstrate the increasingly important role of the crisis prevention measures implemented by the FMEIA 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 relevant technical equipment was optimised by setting up mobile crisis response units.

Although Austrian citizens were not immediately affected by major natural disasters or terrorist attacks in 2009, a considerable number of Austrians contacted the Citizens’ Help Desk and the local Austrian representations to seek information on the security situation in countries like Moldova, Thailand
Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic

and Iran due to political unrest, and on the situation in Italy in the aftermath of the earthquake.

2.2. The EU Dimension

Building on the actions 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 crisis intervention teams on site. Joint information points were set up in airports, refugee centres, hospitals and hotels, joint search teams formed to locate EU citizens, joint evacuation measures put in place and the authorities in the host countries duly contacted after coordination.

3. Assistance in Civil and Criminal Matters

Assistance in legal matters was rendered in a total of 6,610 cases. Representations may, however, not directly interfere with pending proceedings, nor are they authorised to represent Austrian citizens as parties in private law matters.

4. New Treaties

The Agreement between the Federal Minister of the Interior of Austria and the Minister of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Kosovo on Police Cooperation was signed in Pristina on 12 August.

Negotiations on a Bilateral Treaty between the Republic of Austria and the Federative Republic of Brazil on Extradition began in April.

Negotiations between the Republic of Austria and the Slovak Republic on amending and supplementing the Treaty on Police Cooperation of 2005 were launched in May.

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco on Cooperation in the Field of Civil Protection was signed on 9 November and submitted for approval to the National Council (Lower House of the Austrian Parliament).

II. Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic

1. Visas

Austrian nationals holding a regular passport are free to enter 105 states (in 2008: 105) without a visa, including all neighbouring states, Canada, Japan,
the USA and many other states in Africa, Asia and South America. Citizens of 129 countries (in 2008: 138) need a visa to travel to Austria.

Austrian embassies and consulates issued a total of 317,300 visas, which was 16 per cent less than in the previous year. This decrease is on the one hand attributable to the tense economic situation which has prevailed since mid-2008 and, on the other hand, to the fact that the number of longer term visas has increased – due to the entry into force of visa facilitation agreements – and in all probability led to this decline in the overall number of visas granted. Furthermore, the accession of Switzerland to the Schengen Agreement meant that third party nationals staying in Switzerland no longer required visas to enter and/or travel through Austria.

Following intensive preliminary work, the visa obligation for entry and transit through the Schengen states was lifted for nationals of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia on 19 December. A similar step is being planned for Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Albania as soon as these countries fulfil all necessary criteria. The European Commission also started negotiations with Cape Verde and Georgia on visa facilitation and re-admission.

In keeping with the goal of increased cooperation between Austria and Switzerland in the field of consular and visa matters, an Austrian consular official has been based at the Swiss Embassy in Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) since February and is entrusted with handling consular matters relating to Austrian nationals. Following the entry into force of the Agreement on Mutual Representation in Visa Matters, the Swiss Embassy, with the support of the Austrian consular official, will also grant visas locally. The representation of Austria by Switzerland when issuing Schengen visas in Kosovo is also being prepared and negotiations on further representations are currently ongoing.

Agreements on mutual representation in visa matters were also concluded with Lithuania and Estonia and are currently being prepared with the Czech Republic and Latvia.

On 28 August, representatives of 18 Schengen states met in Vienna to discuss topics dealing with intensifying the system of mutual representation of Schengen states, using synergies and further improving the services offered to applicants, by, for instance, creating an even denser network of representations. A common “Schengen exchange”, as suggested by Austria, was set up at this meeting.

On 16 September, the new EU Visa Code came into force, summarising and replacing the various existing EU legislative acts governing visas and harmonising visa legislation. The EU Visa Code will be applied as of 5 April 2010.

On 23 October, an Agreement between the Austrian Federal Government and the Government of the Slovak Republic on Mutual Representation by their Diplomatic and Consular Missions in Procedures for Issuing Visas was signed. Negotiations on the related implementing agreement defining the exact locations for such services are currently underway.
Through continuous implementation of the recommendations made by the Visa Commission, measures aimed at increasing verification reliability and efficiency in the administration of visas as well as customer service quality were also further improved in 2009.

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, a visa workshop was held at the FMEIA on 22 and 23 June to give consular officials the opportunity to engage in an exchange of experiences and share best practices with a view to making the system even more abuse-proof. On 9 September, a visa workshop was held for heads of offices where a guideline on visa administration which had been prepared specifically for heads of missions was presented. Furthermore, the activities of joint FMEIA and Interior Ministry training and audit teams at Austrian representations abroad were intensified. Inspection activity continued at full steam in 2009, and joint inspection visits with the Ministry of the Interior were made specifically to countries with high outgoing migration.

Close cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior on analysis of the development of visa figures, implementation and ongoing monitoring of joint training in the consular field as well as evaluation of visa administration at the missions was continued. The joint Austro-Swiss on-site evaluations of visa practice were also continued, producing findings that proved very useful for both countries.

Close cooperation with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber within the framework of a round table on the tourist industry and a dialogue forum on the topic of visas for business travellers was expanded by mutual participation at information events and workshops organised by the other partner. In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the electronic letter of guarantee was also introduced in 2009 for travel agencies. In order to enable even better accessibility for applicants or those inviting them and to facilitate appointment scheduling, several posts already use the services of external call centres.

2. Border Treaties

Negotiations on the Treaty between the Republic of Austria and the Republic of Slovenia on the course of the national border in the border sections VIII to XV and XXII to XXVII were concluded. Following approval by the Council of Ministers and the National Council (Lower House of the Austrian Parliament) the treaty will be signed and ratified in 2010.

III. Social, Labour and Health Policy

The Agreement with Uruguay on Social Security was signed in Vienna on 14 January. In the course of the year, expert-level talks on planned agree-
ments on social security were concluded with UNIDO and the Republic of Korea and the texts of both agreements approved by the Federal Government. Expert-level talks were also launched with Montenegro.

Talks at expert-level were also started with Liechtenstein on a government agreement on the automatic recognition in Liechtenstein of veterinary drugs and pharmaceuticals for humans that are approved and/or registered in Austria.

IV. Austrians Abroad

The provision of support and services to Austrians abroad are among the core tasks of Austrian embassies and consulates(-general) abroad. Just like the dedicated website of the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs for Austrians abroad (www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at), the Austrian embassies and consulates are an important link between Austrians abroad and their present or former home country. These facilities and the website are the first points of contact and service with regard to passport, citizenship and voting matters, further contact with authorities and consular protection, information about Austria, effective crisis preparedness and coordination, or with respect to facilitating and organising Austria-related events.

As there is no obligation to officially register one’s permanent residence abroad, the figures on Austrian citizens living abroad are often based on estimates. Verifiable figures do not reflect the actual number of Austrians residing abroad. More than 470,000 Austrians are registered at the Austrian embassies and consulates(-general) worldwide. All in all, it can be assumed that about half a million Austrians live abroad. 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).

With a view to facilitating the official registration of Austrians abroad at Austrian embassies and consulates, an option was created on the websites of the FMEIA and the Austrian embassies and consulates in spring 2008 that enables data entry and modification via Internet, making both the initial registration of Austrians abroad and any update of their contact details quicker and easier. The number of “Austrians at heart” (those who do not hold Austrian citizenship but feel a particular attachment to Austria thanks to their former Austrian citizenship, family connections or for other reasons) can only be estimated and probably comprises several hundred thousand individuals.

1. Organisations representing Austrians Abroad

Links between Austrians living abroad and their home country are maintained particularly through associations of Austrians abroad and other soci-
eties in foreign countries. There are more than 400 such associations and societies in almost 60 countries worldwide, a list of which can be found at the dedicated website for Austrians abroad www.AuslandsoesterreicherInnen.at under “Kontakte” / “Vereinigungen” (contacts / associations). Those interested in joining the “AuslandsösterreicherInnen-Netzwerk” (network of Austrians abroad) may register at the dedicated website for Austrians abroad under “AuslandsösterreicherInnen“ (Austrians abroad).

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 maintains a website (www.weltbund.at) and also publishes the magazine “ROT-WEISS-ROT”. This year’s meeting of Austrians abroad, organised annually by the AÖWB in Austria, took place in Innsbruck from 3 to 6 September. In 2009, the AÖWB received funding of 200,000 euros from the FMEIA.

The Burgenländische Gemeinschaft, or Burgenland Community, is the umbrella association of all natives of Burgenland who live abroad. It aims to maintain and deepen the ties of all natives of Burgenland worldwide with their home province. This goal is also pursued by its periodical magazine, “Die Burgenländische Gemeinschaft”. Walter Dujmovits holds the office of President of the Burgenländische Gemeinschaft.

Apart from the traditional associations representing Austrians abroad, there is also an increasing number of Internet Fora, like “Austrians Abroad” (see website http://groups.yahoo.com/group/austriansabroad).

2. Support for Austrian Citizens Abroad

The Fund for the Support of Austrian Citizens Abroad was established in 1967 with a view to assisting Austrians living abroad who find themselves in serious difficulties. The Federal Act on the Fund for Austrians Abroad (Bundesgesetz über den Auslandsösterreicher-Fonds, AÖF-G), Federal Law Gazette I No. 67/2006, which came into force on 1 January 2007, widened the group of potential recipients of support. The Fund is financed by the FMEIA on the one hand and Austria’s nine federal provinces on the other, which contribute 50 per cent each. In 2009, it provided assistance to more than 1,100 needy Austrians in 62 countries, totalling approximately 640,000 euros. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees appointed by the Federal Government is Ambassador Georg Hohenberg, while the office of Managing Director is held by Josef Knapp. Funding provided by the FMEIA to the Fund in 2009 amounted to 342,000 euros.
In the course of the Christmas Campaign, which the FMEIA organises every year in support of needy Austrians abroad, donations in cash and in kind totalling 67,400 euros were provided to 634 needy Austrians in 61 countries worldwide.

For Austrians living abroad who are elderly or severely ill and no longer able to care for themselves, the FMEIA can arrange for repatriation including accommodation in a suitable institution in Austria. Prerequisites for such a return to Austria are that help by relatives or local relief organisations is impossible, the individual’s state of health allows them to travel and he/she agrees to medical repatriation. In 2009, eight Austrians and one family member from seven countries – Argentina, Germany, Peru, Philippines, South Africa, Uruguay and the USA – benefitted from this service.

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

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

As of 1 July 2007, voting rights of Austrians abroad have been simplified substantially. The voting age has been lowered to 16 and 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 anyone unable to cast their vote in a polling station on election day. A signed affidavit is now sufficient for casting one’s vote by postal voting. Postal charges due for sending absentee ballots by normal mail from all parts of the world back to Austria are borne by the Republic of Austria. Furthermore, Austrians abroad can order absentee ballots in advance for a period of ten years (“absentee ballot subscription”) and will automatically receive their absentee ballots for all nationwide elections during this period. 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.

Furthermore, under Federal Constitutional Law the Austrian federal provinces also have the right to give Austrians living abroad the opportunity to vote in elections to the regional parliaments of their former federal province of residence. So far, the provinces of Lower Austria, Tyrol and Vorarlberg have implemented this type of voting right for Austrians abroad. Further information on voting rights of Austrians residing abroad and all relevant forms are available on the website www.wahlinfo.aussenministerium.at.
During the elections to the European Parliament on 16 July, a special “election office” was set up at the FMEIA and a permanent hotline for all questions relating to the topic of voting rights of Austrians abroad was established.


In responding to the calls from Austrians abroad for increased use of modern information and communication technologies (ICT) by the FMEIA, the Ministry established a dedicated website for Austrians abroad (www.auslandsoesterreicherinnen.at) as early as 2002. In 2005, the FMEIA conducted an electronic participation project (www.aoe-umfrage.at) and since 2007 the Internet Guide for Austrians Abroad (www.aoe-ratgeber.at) has been available online.

In spring 2009, the FMEIA conducted another anonymous Internet survey in cooperation with the AÖWB, which sought to identify the areas Austrians abroad are most interested in with respect to their home country. Some 3,000 individuals participated actively in this survey and the priority areas of interest identified dealt with citizenship, Austria-related retirement and insurance issues and participation in Austrian elections.

Together with Austrian researchers, the FMEIA analyses and supports the development of additional ICT applications with a view to using them in communicating with Austrians abroad and enabling their involvement in democratic processes (e-participation) including elections (e-voting). In this context, a meeting of international experts on the topic of “e-voting from abroad” was held in Vienna on 18 and 19 May. The Vienna workshop was the first of such international events to be attended not only by representatives from governments and international organisations, academia and business but also from umbrella organisations of Austrians abroad like the AÖWB. This international workshop was held at the same time as the elections to the official representations of the Austrian Students’ Union (Österreichische HochschülerInnenschaft, ÖH), which were the first elections in Austria to include legally valid e-voting. Workshop contributions as well as conclusions can be accessed at www.auslandsoesterreicherinnen.at.
E. Austrian Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

I. Introduction

Combating poverty in developing countries, securing peace and human security as well as preserving the environment and protecting natural resources are the key objectives of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). The basic principles applied in this context are the partner countries’ right to choose their own development agenda, consideration for cultural and social conditions, equality between men and women as well as respecting 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 contributes proactively to international development policy within the relevant 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 2008, and the results were incorporated into an Agenda for Action containing clear recommendations. Austria has already taken initial steps towards implementing the Accra Agenda. With a view to making the positive impact of development cooperation more visible, the Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy 2009–2011 thus also includes a “results” section.

2. Legal Basis

The Federal Development Cooperation Act (DCA) forms the legal basis for a coherent Austrian development policy. It contains a specific catalogue of objectives defining the development policy criteria to be pursued by the entire Austrian federal administration. All relevant activities are coordinated by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, which also holds responsibility for the strategic orientation of ADC. The operational tasks associated with ADC are performed by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), which implements bilateral programmes and projects in the partner countries.

3. Budget for Development Cooperation

Since the joint decision taken in June 2005, Austria has contributed to the EU’s efforts aimed at continuously increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA). According to preliminary data reported to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), Austrian ODA amounted to 823 million
Introduction

euros or 0.30 per cent of gross national income (GNI) in 2009. With respect to funding available for specific development cooperation schemes, the operational budget for concrete projects and programmes has remained at more or less the same level. Austria has also increased its contributions to multilateral organisations.

4. Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of today’s generation without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs and choose their own lifestyle. Injustice, a growing divide between rich and poor, increasing environmental destruction – also caused by climate change – disrespect for human rights and war contradict the principles of sustainability. A key aspect in ensuring the sustainable nature of development is that those affected have a say with respect to the direction their development process is taking. Sustainable, long-term success is therefore contingent on strengthening the partner countries’ institutional competences and capacities. Decision-making needs to be decentralised and democratic structures and procedures must be put in place and promoted. In this spirit, an improved range of public services will facilitate citizens’ increased identification with their country and subsequently lead to greater sustainability. Thus ADC is not only committed to making sustainable, environmentally sound use of natural resources, but is also active in the field of conflict management and good governance. Furthermore, all projects undergo a thorough environmental impact and sustainability assessment.

5. Policy Coherence in the Interest of Development

Policy coherence is an essential requirement for efficient and effective development cooperation. In Austria, the principle of policy coherence is enshrined in Article 1 paragraph 5 of the Federal Development Cooperation Act. Key mechanisms that enable ADC to systematically address coherence topics include the Interministerial Coherence Working Group at working level, reviewing draft bills relating to development issues, the interministerial coordination of regional strategy planning, the Development Policy Advisory Committee and dialogue with interest groups and stakeholders, including civil society representatives, under the “Structured Dialogue” initiative. Furthermore, ADC proactively supports the EU’s efforts towards establishing the coherence principle across the Union.

Achievement of development policy goals requires the involvement of the state as a whole. In line with this objective the new Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy 2009–2011 marks an important step towards a nationwide strategy by visibly involving all public ADC players.
II. Bilateral Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

1. Bilateral Development Cooperation – South

1.1. Key Region Central America

The development policy priorities pursued by ADC for the Central America region were laid down in the Regional Strategy Central America 2009–2013 and form the basis for all future development cooperation activities.

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 aimed at improving the framework for small commercial and farming enterprises and enabling marginalised populations to call for and claim respect of their human rights. Under the Energy and Environment Partnership with Central America, ADC, together with Finland, promotes use of renewable forms of energy.

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

Cooperation in the Caribbean Region, which is particularly prone to natural disasters, focused on strengthening capacities – especially of CARICOM, disaster relief and activities related to climate change (geared towards promoting renewable energy and the environment). In cooperation with the Salzburg Klessheim International Institute of Tourism and Hotel Management (ITH), Austria provided students with opportunities to train as skilled personnel in the tourism industry.

1.2. Key Region West Africa

Energy, conflict prevention and local development models were the thematic priorities in West Africa. Cooperation with ECOWAS was strengthened, particularly through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (the second since the 2006 MoU on conflict prevention) in support of establishing the Cape Verde-based regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

The bilateral cooperation agreement between Austria and Burkina Faso, signed in 2008 for a period of six years, was implemented according to plan in 2009. Austria continued to provide support in the areas of rural development, vocational education and training, the promotion of trades and crafts, as well as in the establishment of small and micro enterprises. In political dialogue, special importance is attached to the drafting of national sectoral policies whose implementation will be supported by Austria.
The ADC Coordination Office in **Senegal** was closed down on 30 November. Intensive preparations in the lead-up to its closure enabled an open political dialogue and responsibility of individual ADC-supported projects to be assumed by other donors. Projects in the field of sustainable rural development that were in the process of being implemented will be duly completed.

Austria decided to discontinue bilateral ADC support in the priority country **Cape Verde** and close down the local Coordination Office on 30 June 2010. While implementing the ongoing projects in the fields of decentralisation and regional development and promoting the implementation of the National Environmental Action Plan through Sectoral Budget Support, the withdrawal was prepared at political and operational level. From 2010, Austria will contribute under the special EU Partnership with Cape Verde and valorise other ADC instruments (regional cooperation, cooperation in the fields of NGOs, business and education) in response to the **graduation of Cape Verde to Middle Income Country**.

### 1.3. Key Region East Africa

At regional level, water supply and integrated water resource management on the one hand and peacekeeping as well as conflict prevention on the other, were the thematic priorities pursued in cooperation with regional organisations and in agreement with specific technical networks.

In the priority country **Ethiopia**, ADC was mainly engaged in the fields of rural development/food security and health care. Interventions also focused on the areas of renewable energy, gender, science and research. ADC contributed to funding a national multi-donor programme to ensure and improve public services in the healthcare, education, agricultural and water supply sectors.

In line with the national Poverty Eradication Action Plan, ADC activities in the priority country **Uganda** focused primarily on the water supply, sanitation and justice sectors. ADC also provided support in the form of study grants as well as study and science programmes. A particular focus of ADC activities was on reconstruction efforts in the country’s civil war-torn northern regions.

In **Rwanda**, ADC efforts focused on the areas of water supply and sanitation and on the process of coming to terms with the genocide.

The focus of ADC activity in **Kenya** was on cooperation with NGOs in the areas of agricultural production, healthcare and empowerment of women.

### 1.4. Key Region Southern Africa

Efforts launched by ADC in the **key region Southern Africa** centred on governance issues, related in particular to access to land, land use and infrastructure. ADC activities focus specifically on strengthening a legal system
that ensures legal certainty. What is essential in this context is implementing the two-fold goal of a sound public sector that adheres to principles like transparency and participation and is accountable to citizens – and a civil society that is capable of both voicing the needs and requirements of disadvantaged members of society and calling for them to be met. In the infrastructure sector, ADC promotes access to affordable and high-quality energy and transport services in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

ADC efforts in the region are part of the Regional Indicative Programme 2008 – 2013, which was agreed with the SADC by the European Commission and the EU Member States. It is the first time that ADC has been mentioned with its regional profile as an International Cooperation Partner (ICP) of the SADC. This programme of the European Commission is based on the SADC’s regional development plans, the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) and the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Peace and Security (SIPO).

The new country strategy 2009–2013 for the priority country Mozambique was drafted on the basis of the current Mozambican Government Programme and the Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty. As agreed with the government of Mozambique, the province Sofala remains an ADC priority region. The relevant activities are directed at promoting national decentralisation efforts with the thematic focus being placed on rural drinking water supply, sanitation and smallholder agriculture. The country strategy is implemented in cooperation with the Mozambican government, and particularly with the subnational authorities of the Sofala province government.

Mozambique is the first priority country to which ADC makes available both Sector Budget Support and General Budget Support. Under the latter, funding goes directly to the country’s general budget, while Sector Budget Support goes to the budget of Mozambique’s Ministry of Agriculture and its National Development Strategy, with Austria’s contribution being earmarked for the Sofala province.

In the context of drafting integrated development plans, the relevant ADC activities in South Africa focused on developing sub-national government administration capacities and empowering the civilian population.

The regional focus of ADC was on the poorest provinces of South Africa.

In Zimbabwe, ADC supported projects led by local civil society players that focus on developing capabilities in rural districts and on measures to ensure food security and increase household incomes.

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 launched under the auspices of the **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development**.

The new country strategy 2009–2013 for the **priority country Bhutan** is being prepared on the basis of the Bhutanese Government’s Tenth Five Year Plan. In Bhutan, ADC focuses on the areas of energy, tourism and governance. In the energy sector, technical assistance was provided for the Dagachhu hydro power plant and for rural electrification in the Phobjikha Valley. In the tourism sector, activities focused on the construction of the training hotel and Hotel and Tourism Management Training Institute (HTMTI) and developing curricula for the HTMTI in which context advice and support was given to the institute’s management and teaching staff. In the governance sector, the decentralisation process in Bhutan and the strengthening of local governments’ capabilities were supported in cooperation with other donors.

### 1.6. Palestinian Territories

ADC involvement focused on the areas of health, water/sewage, humanitarian aid – also in response to the war in the Gaza Strip at the beginning of the year – capacity building, particularly in the field of women’s rights. Criteria for the selection of the programmes and projects are compliance with the Palestinian Reform and Development Plan 2008–2010 and regard for both parts of the Palestinian Territories, i.e. the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. ADC programmes are coordinated with the relevant ministries and other bilateral donors and implemented largely through international organisations – such as the European Commission – and Palestinian NGOs.

### 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 strengthening the rule of law, governance and civil society.

In the **priority country Albania**, ADC support focused mainly on the fields of water and sanitation, vocational education, regional development and poverty reduction/social inclusion. In the cross-cutting areas of governance and gender equality, the focus was on building up the Integrated Planning System and establishing Gender Focal Points. Bilateral cooperation was based on the country strategy 2007–2009. A new country strategy for the 2010–2014 period is currently being prepared.

The country strategy 2005–2007 was continued for the **priority country Bosnia and Herzegovina**, with a special focus on the private sector, development
and education. Activities in the area of mine clearance and land registry administration – launched in the context of enhancing the investment climate – were also continued and measures aimed at strengthening the common identity of the entire state of Bosnia and Herzegovina supported. With a view to improving gender equality, ADC supports the implementation of the national Gender Action Plan. Work aimed at drafting a new country strategy 2010–2014 was also begun for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the priority country Macedonia, the focus of ADC activities was put on the environment, water and energy as well as the private sector and development. By promoting private sector development and the areas of renewable energy and energy efficiency, ADC aims to contribute to reaching the two-fold goal of poverty reduction and sustainable as well as socially balanced development. Against the background of generally positive developments in the context of EU pre-accession, a phasing-out strategy 2010–2012 setting out the withdrawal of ADC from Macedonia was adopted.

Cooperation with the priority country Montenegro was strengthened in the areas of sustainable regional and tourism development in the Northeast of Montenegro and at Lake Scutari. Moreover, actions in the priority area of vocational training and higher education and activities aimed at promoting administrative capabilities were implemented. Against the background of the favourable socio-economic developments and the progress achieved in approximation to the EU, a phasing-out strategy 2010–2012 was also adopted for Montenegro.

Work aimed at drafting a new country strategy 2010–2014 was launched for the priority country Serbia. The focus of ADC support for Serbia is on private sector development, employment and higher education. The integrated regional development programmes for Vojvodina and South Serbia focus on private sector modernisation. In the field of regional development, the Coordination Office in Belgrade took the leading role within the donors’ community. The bilateral agreement on development cooperation between Austria and Serbia was signed in 2009.

Cooperation in the priority country Kosovo was based on the country strategy 2008–2011, under which the Institutional Partnership for Higher Education, initiated by ADC together with the Austrian and Kosovar ministries of education, was continued. Furthermore, actions were funded in the areas of promotion of SMEs, water supply and regional development with a specific focus on the large community of Suhareka.

Against the background of the advancing process of EU integration, ADC efforts in Croatia were terminated.

In addition to the bilateral programmes, ADC will continue to fund cross-regional cooperation programmes within the Regional Strategy for South Eastern Europe over the next few years. In this context, emphasis is placed on sustainable, long-term securing of peace and development of the whole
region, inter alia by projects which focus on conflict resolution and strengthening of national administrations. The “Balkan Case Challenge”, a case study competition combined with a job fair for South East European students, was again held in Vienna. In cooperation with the Diplomatic Academy, ADC supports training of public service staff in South Eastern Europe.

2.2. Eastern Europe and Central Asia

In Southern Caucasus the focus of ADC remained on conflict prevention and conflict management, strengthening the rule of law and human security as well as promoting civil society with a special focus on women, youth and journalists. In Central Asia, ADC cooperated with NGOs supporting mainly social projects. In 2009, the Southern Caucasus and Central Asian regions benefited from ADC funds amounting to 6.3 million euros.

The most important goal of ADC activities in Moldova is creating life perspectives in rural areas, particularly by improving water supply and sanitation as well as through labour market-oriented vocational training and the promotion of vocational schools that provide agricultural training. Further priorities of ADC assistance are coordination of return and integration assistance to migrants returning on a voluntary basis, and the EU-oriented strengthening of the country’s public administration. ADC funds of 2.3 million euros were invested in Moldova in 2009.

3. Themes and Sectors

The primary objective of ADC is to reduce global poverty in all its dimensions, to enable people to develop their capacities and articulate their political interests, to satisfy basic human needs and ensure security with due account being taken of socio-cultural factors. In this context, emphasis is placed on providing support and assistance for vulnerable groups in partner countries and disadvantaged regions. ADC continued to proactively pursue this fundamental goal in 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 enhance living conditions and opportunities for the rural population and improve food supply in the partner countries. Soaring prices resulted in a food crisis in many countries that went hand in hand with a rise in the number of starving people. International alignment thus focused on common solutions for a rapid response and coordinated sustainable strategies and actions.

ADC plays an active role in fostering decentralisation processes in the partner countries both by directly supporting national programmes as well as promoting such programmes through complementary interventions. The focus of
the relevant activities was on capacity-building and developing the necessary capabilities of political and administrative bodies and of other parties involved at local level, empowering the population to participate in decision-making processes and making the best possible use of existing social resources.

Implementation activities are currently underway in the areas of governance, human rights and peacekeeping. In cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, a workshop on security sector reform was held with the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC). Furthermore, a training seminar on conflict sensitivity was organised. Activities supported at the programme and project levels included global and regional initiatives aimed at strengthening African parliaments and empowering women in peace processes and conflict situations in implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 (2000). Projects launched under current country programmes were continued, including in the areas of judicial reform, strengthening of civil society in conflict prevention and promotion of peace processes.

Security and development is a new area of ADC activity. In its Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy 2009 – 2011, ADC prepared the ground for drafting a guideline on “security and development” and set up a working group dealing with “fragility”. At the multilateral conference held in Geneva in March, ADC contributed actively to the 3 C (coordination – complementarity – coherence) approach designed for fragile states and also participates proactively in the International Network on Conflict and Fragility established by the OECD. Under the UN peacekeeping reform, Austria launched an initiative for stronger consideration of socio-economic effects of international peace missions. This topic was presented to a large international audience at a high-level panel meeting held during the European Development Days in Stockholm in October.

Equality between women and men and empowerment of disadvantaged women are key principles pursued by ADC. In keeping with its goal of implementing gender mainstreaming (i.e. integrating a gender perspective in all policy areas), ADC/ADA conducted in-service training for employees both in Austria and at the coordination offices abroad. Particular emphasis was placed in this context on integrating equality concerns as a theme that cuts across all sectors, such as gender budgeting (ensuring that public budgets take gender-specific aspects into account) for instance. Thematic priorities included issues relating to “gender and conflict”, in which context projects to counter human trafficking or aimed at implementing UNSC resolution 1325 (women, peace & security) were conducted. This topic was also addressed by three new UN Security Council resolutions (UNSC resolutions 1820 and 1888 (on the protection of women in armed conflict and particularly protection from sexual violence) and 1889 (on the role of women in peace processes) and the gender-sensitive implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. Several events organised within the framework of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue dealt with “women’s rights and gen-
Bilateral Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe

der perspectives”. Acting in analogy with other donors the MDG3 Campaign (3rd Millennium Development Goal: Equality between Women and Men and Empowerment of Women) was continued.

In the education sector the international reference framework is shaped by the “Education for All” goals, agreed upon at the World Education Forum in Dakar, and the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals). ADC published its “Higher Education and Scientific Cooperation” strategy, which outlines the conceptual framework for the most important projects for the next five years. An important implementation instrument is the newly designed higher education cooperation programme APPEAR, which enables multi-year partnerships between higher education institutes in the priority countries of ADC South and Austria in order to facilitate a comprehensive strengthening of capacities. 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 and Research Area and foster reform of vocational training in the fields of economics and tourism. Furthermore, ADC contributed proactively to the EU Education Working Group, which was involved in preparing the recent European Commission communication on education, and to the Association for the Development of Education in Africa.

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 businesses in ADC. Furthermore, ADC is a member of the Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG), a group of donors set up to mobilise private investment in infrastructure in Africa. By contributing 300 million US dollars since 2002 the PIDG donors have mobilised a volume of 9 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, the ADA entered into a strategic cooperation with the Vienna-based office of the World Bank. Business partnerships with domestic enterprises were further intensified. By the end of the year, a total of 41 projects were being implemented involving a total funding volume of 7 million euros. Through ADC contributions, total funding of 19 million euros was thus mobilised for development-related actions.

Work was continued on strengthening the area of infrastructure, which is made up mainly of the water and energy sectors.

Austria held the chair of the Africa Working Group (AWG) under the EU Water Initiative, thus succeeding in positioning itself successfully in the water sector. The goal of enhancing the measures’ overall effectiveness in order to achieve the sector-relevant MDGs is pursued by coordinating the interventions by all European players in the AWG. The AWG’s key partner in these efforts is the African Ministerial Council on Water (AMCOW). In
June, the Governing Council Meeting of the World Bank’s Water and Sanitation Programme (WSP) was held in Vienna. At this meeting, Austria succeeded in substantially influencing the setting of priorities in so far as the focus is now being increasingly shifted towards emerging and fast growing townships in Africa’s rural regions. This focus was also applied in the new funding agreements the ADA and the Federal Ministry of Finance concluded with the WSP. Cooperation in the water sector focuses on Uganda, Mozambique, Palestine, Albania and Moldova while activities are being phased out in Rwanda, Cape Verde, Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia.

ADC stepped up its commitment in the energy sector, thus also strengthening Vienna’s position as a location for international energy diplomacy. Together with the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy (GFSE), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA), Austria organised a large energy conference held from 22 to 24 June, which was attended by some 800 international experts. In the course of the foundation of the new International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), a liaison office was opened in Vienna to connect IRENA to the United Nations’ international energy network and to other international organisations active in the energy sector. Together with Germany and the European Commission, Austria holds the chair in the EU-Africa Energy Partnership. In July, a Bhutanese delegation, the OeKB (Österreichische Kontrollbank) and representatives of Austrian business signed supply and loan contracts for the Dagachhu hydro power plant, which ADC has supported for several years. At a visit paid by the Chairman of ECOWAS in July, the FMEIA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on supporting the establishment of a regional centre for renewable energy. At project level, ADC gradually expanded its energy priority in the regions of West Africa, Southern Africa, Central America/Caribbean, Himalaya and South Eastern Europe.

The preparation of a strategic guide on environment and development was the main focus of activities in the environment area. In line with the principle of overall Austrian coherence, it was drafted jointly by the ADA, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management and numerous other Austrian stakeholders. At the beginning of September, the Ministerial Council took note of this strategic guide. In terms of integration of environmental issues into programmes and projects, the main focus was on contributions to climate protection and adaptation to the effects of climate change. In this context, ADC contributed substantially to facilitating interministerial cooperation in the lead-up to and during the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December.

4. Co-financing

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are important partners of ADC: NGO co-financing covers project schemes launched on the NGOs’ own ini-
tiative 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 the ADC Policy Document on NGO Cooperation.

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

Under the personnel development cooperation scheme, two Austrian NGOs received funding for the posting of experts and interns. The funding guideline for personnel development was completed.

Within the framework of individual NGO projects, 21 projects were approved in developing countries of the South, in South Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Furthermore, ten micro-projects carried out by Austrian NGOs were co-financed. In addition to ongoing projects co-financed by the EU, a further 14 new funding agreements for the next few years were entered into.

With a view to implementing the Accra Agenda for Action, the ADA contributed proactively to the areas of Aid Effectiveness & Civil Society under the Core Donors Group. In this context, the ADA is particularly active in the field of Aid Effectiveness of Civil Society Organisations.

5. Evaluation

Under the sharing of responsibilities agreement, the FMEIA is responsible for selecting the strategic evaluations and their themes while the ADA is in charge of operational management. Strategic evaluations generally cover specific ADC themes, sectors, instruments or country strategies rather than dealing with individual projects. These strategic evaluations are tendered in accordance with the Austrian Federal Law on Public Procurement and carried out by organisations and companies, which are selected on the basis of a technical appraisal of their content-related and methodical concepts and are awarded contracts to perform the evaluation.

The evaluation of the country programme for Serbia and the evaluation of the private sector and development instruments were completed and plans developed for their implementation. Further strategic evaluations related to the humanitarian aid provided by ADC, cooperation in the higher education sector and, under a review, the Budget Support instrument. The implementation plan for the Burkina Faso evaluation was also continued.

Following in-depth discussions, a plan for implementing the findings of the DAC peer review was drawn up. Furthermore, the implementation status of the recommendations prepared following the ADA evaluation is regularly updated by the ADA.
At international level, the FMEIA and the ADA were regularly represented in the bodies and networks responsible for evaluation within the EU, within the framework of the OECD’s Development Assistance Committee (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 ADA also took part in the UNIDO peer review, the report on which will be presented in the first quarter of 2010.

III. Multilateral Development Cooperation

The international community focused its development policy efforts on implementing the MDGs and countering as well as alleviating the negative impact the global financial and economic crisis has had on developing countries.

1. The United Nations

The resolutions of the 2005 World Summit form the relevant framework of reference for development policy cooperation at United Nations level. In this context, a number of high-level events were held to discuss and evaluate the progress and achievements of partner and donor countries. Based on the UNSG’s reports and recommendations prepared by an experts’ commission chaired by Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz, the high-level conference on the global financial and economic crisis that convened in New York at the end of June made a substantial contribution to the debate on the reform of the international monetary and financial system. Although the preparatory process had been marked by stark contrast between industrialised and developing countries, a final document was adopted that started a process, supported by all UN Member States, for improved coordination of activities aimed at countering the impact of the crisis on the poorest countries.

At the beginning of July, UNSG Ban Ki-moon presented the 2009 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Report in Geneva, which – against the background of the financial and economic crisis – identified lack of progress in implementing the MDGs. Particularly in the fields of combating poverty and hunger, primary education for all children, child mortality and improvement of maternal health there was a clear deceleration of progress and even a negative trend emerging following the initial success achieved in previous years. Some headway was, however, made with respect to equality of women and men as well as women’s empowerment, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, environment/water/sanitation and in the Global Partnership for Development. Notwithstanding that, the report came to the conclusion that the successful implementation of all MDGs by the target date of 2015 was called into question or jeopardised, which was stated to hold particularly true for Sub-Saharan Africa and Oceania.
At a high-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation, held in Nairobi at the beginning of December, representatives of developing countries stressed the important role played by South-South cooperation, emphasising that it was by no means a replacement for North-South cooperation but rather a real complement to it. It was pointed out that South-South cooperation was not contributing to rigidifying the donor/beneficiary hierarchy but rather promoted cooperation in partnership. An increasingly important role was played in this context by triangular cooperation between countries of the North and at least two countries of the South. One of the main calls issued by the conference was to raise South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to the level of assistance by traditional donor countries.

Austria supported the implementation of the five strategic goals laid down in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) – democratisation, poverty reduction, energy and environmental protection, crisis prevention/reconstruction and combating HIV/AIDS – in line with the UNDP’s expanded strategic plan for 2008–2013, making available total funding of 6.2 million euros. This sum includes contributions to the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (400,000 euros), the Thematic Trust Fund for HIV/AIDS (500,000 euros) and the Energy Thematic Trust Fund (100,000 euros). Austria furthermore supports the UN reform process in Albania and Cape Verde (with 200,000 euros each) aimed at achieving the goal of faster and more efficient implementation of development cooperation operations on the ground and boosting the process towards achieving the MDGs. The UN pilot initiative “Delivering as One” correlates with this approach and focuses on raising the degree of coherence and efficiency in the operational area of the UN development architecture through the establishment of joint offices.

The UN Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has been vested with the mandate to support structures and democratic development processes at local level, focusing especially on issues relating to planning, management and the participation of civil society. UNCDF does not only provide support in building up the financial sector through its local development programmes and micro funding projects, but also makes available funding for establishing democratic structures at local level in the least developed countries. Austria has increased its contribution to the UNCDF’s core budget substantially and decisively supported the Fund’s work by funding a project in Sierra Leone.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) is a relatively small and decentralised programme, which supports projects monitoring demographic developments. The Fund plays an important role in connection with the central theme of reproductive health, focusing both on the prevention of HIV/AIDS and on strengthening the role of girls and women. In line with the Three-Year Programme of Austrian Development Policy, Austria increased its contribution to the UNFPA’s core budget. This approach was complemented by the support granted to the Maternal Health Thematic Fund.
The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) implemented its Medium-Term Strategic Plan for the years 2006–2009. The priorities defined in this plan focused the organisation’s work even further than in the past. Austria supported UNICEF’s activities in the field of combating polio in Ethiopia and strengthening children’s rights in Kosovo.

After years of restructuring, the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) has become one of the most efficient UN organisations. Headed by Director-General Kandeh K. Yumkella, who was re-elected for a further four years, it enjoys high esteem. Austria was re-elected as a member of the Programme and Budget Committee (PBC) and of the Industrial Development Board (IDB). Austria’s high level of financial commitment remained unchanged: in addition to its compulsory contribution of around one million euros, a voluntary contribution of 1.2 million euros in total enabled support of various UNIDO programmes (including investment aimed at further improving the organisation’s management, investment in Africa, youth employment in West Africa, and green projects).

2. European Union

With a share of about 60 per cent in the total international development assistance, the EU (Member States and Commission) is the largest block of donors worldwide. Austria’s financial contribution to the EU’s development cooperation is the largest single item of Austrian ODA. In 2009, Austria contributed 235 million euros to development cooperation under the EU budget and the European Development Fund (EDF), which is 29 per cent of Austria’s total ODA.

In the field of development cooperation, the focus was on the impact the financial and economic crisis had on developing countries and on preparation for the Copenhagen Climate Conference. Austria contributed intensively to the preparations for the individual Council conclusions at EU level. Priority issues in this context were gender mainstreaming, food security, renewable energy, innovative funding mechanisms (financial transactions tax) and climate change.

At the Development Council meeting in May, Council Conclusions were adopted on supporting developing countries in managing the crisis which also emphasises the importance of anti-cyclical action. In this context, the need to adapt the ongoing cooperation programmes as quickly as possible to the new framework conditions, to accelerate payments from the European Development Fund (front loading), establish a Vulnerability FLEX Mechanism for the countries that were hardest hit by the crisis and increase funding for the infrastructure fund for Africa was stressed. The existing pledges to increase ODA were confirmed.

Likewise, Council conclusions adopted in the first half year dealt with access to sustainable sources of energy at local level in developing countries — a
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topic to which ADC also attaches particular importance – and democratic
governance and disaster risk reduction in developing countries.

In the second half year, development cooperation focused on climate change
and endeavours to influence the EU’s position for Copenhagen to make sure
that the concerns of developing countries, which bear the least responsibility
for climate change but are affected most severely by its consequences, were
considered. This holds particularly true for the poorest developing countries
and the small island states. In November, Council Conclusions were adopted
on the topics of climate change and development. The conclusions stress
the need for a coherent, long-term perspective and the specific importance
of adaptation measures and measures aimed at reducing emissions (mitiga-
tion). It is also pointed out that a gradual but significant increase in public
as well as private funding is required to enable developing countries to take
these measures.

Council Conclusions were also adopted on supporting democratic govern-
ance and intensifying efforts towards coherent policies aimed at promoting
development, in which context the focus over the next few years is to be
placed on trade, climate change, food security, migration and safety and
development.

The adoption of an Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness marked an
important step towards the implementation of the Accra Agenda for Action
to Implement the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. This framework
defines what the EU wants to achieve within which timeframe with respect
to division of labour, adaptation to national systems and technical coopera-
tion for enhanced capacity development.

By the end of 2007, a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)
had only been concluded with the Caribbean region. Interim EPAs were con-
cluded with several other countries and subregions and negotiations on com-
prehensive EPAs thus continued. However, against the background of the
economic crisis the developing countries’ concerns about such agreements
increased and many least developed countries (LDCs) consider the “Every-
thing but Arms” regulation (which gives free access to the European market
for all products except arms but requires compliance with strict rules of ori-
gin) to be more advantageous.

Implementation of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted in 2007, and the
Joint Action Plan 2008–2010 was fostered. The latter provides for eight the-
matic partnerships between the EU and Africa. Austria contributes proac-
tively to two of these partnerships, namely the energy partnership, which it
co-chairs with Germany, and the partnership for peace and security.
3. Assignments Completed by Young Austrians

Young Austrian university graduates are given the opportunity to serve on duty tours limited to two years as Junior Professional Officers (JPO) with UN organisations in order to gain development policy experience. The FMEIA bears the costs of such placements.

All in all, 25 Austrian junior professional officers worked with various UN development policy organisations, such as UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNEP and UNCDF. They served within the external representation networks in Albania, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guyana, Kenya, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldavia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Ruanda, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Uganda and Brussels or at these organisations’ headquarters in Nairobi, 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 and is jointly funded by the FMEIA and the European Commission. Four Austrians worked in delegations of the European Commission to Argentina, Burundi, Fiji and Pakistan.

IV. Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief, International Humanitarian Organisations

1. Austrian Bilateral Humanitarian Aid

Bilateral humanitarian aid provided by Austria is funded and overseen by Austrian Development Cooperation, the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, the federal provinces and municipalities and other public institutions.

Bilateral humanitarian aid provided by the ADA comprises the areas of humanitarian emergency action, reconstruction and disaster prevention and aims to both support chronic crisis regions and respond to unforeseeable disasters. The funds are made available directly by the ADA either to international organisations or to NGOs. In 2009, the ADA contributed 3.3 million euros to 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 connection with international disasters, amounted to 8.5 million euros in 2009.

In response to requests for assistance under the EU mechanism and in direct coordination with the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) operated by the European Commission, Austria provided international disaster relief in a number of cases. Following the gas/energy crisis in Moldova, heaters,
blankets and electricity generators were made available in January from the resources of the Federal Ministry of the Interior with logistics support given by the Austrian Red Cross and the Austrian Federal Fire Brigade Association. During the floods in Namibia in March and April, Austria, assisted by the Red Cross, equipped the affected population with mosquito nets, plastic tarpaulins and provided emergency assistance kits for the initial medical care of 20,000 people in total. During the flood disaster in the border region between Namibia, Angola and Botswana in the second half of March, a female expert from the Federal Army formed part of a team dispatched by the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and one public official from the Province of Tyrol was sent in his capacity as EU expert to the region affected by the disaster. During the flood disaster that hit Tajikistan in May, Austria, with logistics assistance from the Austrian Red Cross, provided affected families with tents from the resources of the Federal Ministry of the Interior’s disaster relief programme. An EU coordination expert from the Federal Ministry of the Interior also took part in this relief mission.

In the aftermath of the seaquake and tsunami on Samoa in September, Austria made available an EU coordination expert from the Austrian Red Cross (Austrian water expert to assist the UNDAC team on the ground) under its international disaster relief scheme.

Austria responded to Ukraine’s call for help due to the increased occurrence of new flu cases (influenza A/H1N1) in November and, with logistics support from the Austrian Red Cross, provided Ukraine with protective masks, disinfectants, protective gloves and an EU coordination expert from the Vienna city ambulance service. Apart from Ukraine, the Federal Ministry of the Interior and the Austrian Red Cross also provided assistance to Bulgaria which was also hit by influenza H1/N1.

Reacting to the drought and food shortage in East Africa – of which Ethiopia and Kenya were particularly severely affected – Austria made available humanitarian aid from the resources of the ADA and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management in response to the appeals for help from the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC).

1.1. Foreign Disaster Relief Fund

In the aftermath of the escalation of fighting in Sri Lanka, Austria made available 200,000 euros from the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund in order to contribute together with the international community towards mitigating the humanitarian catastrophe on the ground. At the donors’ conference in Sharm El Sheikh in March (International Conference in Support of the Palestine Economy for the Reconstruction of Gaza), Austria made available 2.5 million euros for humanitarian relief projects in the Gaza Strip launched by the UN
Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. At the request of the Foreign Ministry of Bhutan, Austria made available an amount of 400,000 euros from the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund to the government of Bhutan (Gross Happiness Commission) to provide assistance in mitigating the consequences of the large-scale flooding caused by the cyclone Ailia. Furthermore, Austria provided 400,000 euros from the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund channelled through the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Aid (UN-OCHA) to Burkina Faso following the heavy flooding in September and 200,000 euros each to the Philippines and Indonesia.

1.2. Austrian Mine Action Programme
The Austrian Mine Action Programme makes 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-raising concerning mine risks. The ADA concluded new agreements in which the main focus is placed on Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Africa.

1.3. 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. Beneficiaries are selected on recommendation of the FMEIA in coordination 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 Myanmar and Guatemala. This assistance is mainly processed through the UN World Food Programme (WFP), the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) but also through other organisations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNDP.

2. Austrian Multilateral Humanitarian Aid
2.1. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-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, the OCHA operates a network of 30 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 handed over its chairmanship of the Consultative Group of the Military and Civil Defence Unit (MCDU) to Switzerland. Five Austrians attended
the UN Civil Military Cooperation (UN-CMCoord) training programme. Personnel and financial resources from the Federal Ministry of the Interior were made available to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team. Furthermore, Austria supports the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) by providing primarily experts and response teams. The Federal Ministry of the Interior was made National Focal Point of the Joint UNEP/OCHA Environment Unit and of the UN-SPIDER Programme (UN Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response).

### 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 contribution to the core budget and by funding concrete projects in Algeria, Ethiopia and Uganda. Moreover, Austria also funded one JPO.

### 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 suffering. Austria supported the ICRC’s operational work in Gaza as well as that of the IFRC and contributed to the ICRC headquarters budget. Furthermore, Austria also provided food aid to Kenya and Ethiopia through the ICRC.

### 2.4. United Nations World Food Programme

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) is the UN’s largest humanitarian organisation. Austria contributed to the WFP’s efforts towards mitigating the effects of the global food crisis by supporting its operational work in Malawi and Guatemala.

### 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 in the
wake of the armed unrest in the Gaza Strip, Austria made available funds to UNRWA from the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund at the beginning of the year. Austria also supported the implementation of a water and sanitation project.

2.6. Other Multilateral Aid

Austria contributed to humanitarian aid worldwide through the European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), whose budget amounted to some 920 million euros.

2.7. Central Emergency Response Fund

The reformed Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) of the United Nations was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2005 and became operational in March 2006. In establishing the CERF, the UN implemented a central reform project in the humanitarian field. It is a major improvement over the system of flash appeals, which were provided with funds by member states only after a disaster or crisis had struck. In contrast to this, the CERF is a standby fund which enables more timely and reliable humanitarian assistance to those affected by natural disasters and armed conflicts. Austria made a core contribution to the UN Central Emergency Response Fund.
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. The review conference marking the 10th anniversary of the coming into force of the Ottawa Convention was one of the major events of 2009 and reflected the recognition of the important role played by the mine ban regime. The year was also characterised by an increased momentum particularly in the fields of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Austria’s continued pro-active commitment was reflected in the functions it held as co-chair of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament as well as in the Chemical Weapon Convention’s Executive Council.

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

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Since it entered into force in 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has formed the basis of the international nuclear regime under international law whilst serving as one of the cornerstones of nuclear non-proliferation. The only states never to have joined the NPT are India, Israel and Pakistan, while the unilateral withdrawal declared by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in 2003 has not been internationally recognised.

The NPT rests on three pillars: nuclear disarmament of the five nuclear weapons states recognised under the Treaty (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the USA); non-proliferation, i.e. renunciation of the other states party to the Treaty to acquire nuclear weapons; and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy in the fields of energy production, medicine, agriculture, industry, etc.

The third session of the Preparatory Committee, held in New York from 4 to 15 May, defined the agenda as well as all organisational and procedural issues for the next Review Conference, scheduled for May 2010, and designated the chair. Since preparation was far more comprehensive than for the 2005 Review Conference, the states parties participating in the 2010 Conference will thus be able to focus on content rather than procedural issues.
2. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) provides for a comprehensive ban on all nuclear explosions. The CTBT has been signed by 182 states and ratified by 151, including Austria. However, as only 35 of the 44 Key States listed in Annex 2 have ratified it to date, the CTBT has not entered into force yet.

In their capacity as co-chairs of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (Article XIV Conference) for the period from September 2007 to September 2009, Austria and Costa Rica undertook intensive efforts to speed up the treaty ratification process. In the course of these two years the CTBT was signed by two and ratified by nine states. Under the co-chair of France and Morocco, an Article XIV Conference was held in New York on 24 September in which the USA was represented for the first time at Secretary of State level by Hillary Clinton.

The Provisional Technical Secretariat (PTS) of the CTBT Preparatory Commission for the Organization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT PrepCom) is responsible for establishing the International Monitoring System (IMS). This system covers 337 monitoring stations of which 250 have already been certified. Although the IMS was designed to detect nuclear explosions, such as those triggered by the nuclear weapons tests carried out by North Korea in 2006 and 2009, it is also used for civilian purposes. Seismic data collected by the IMS is, for instance, supplied regularly to a tsunami warning system. Such applications add to the significance of the work of the CTBT PrepCom and extend beyond the sphere of nuclear non-proliferation. In June 2009, the PTS, with the support of Austria, organised an International Scientific Studies Conference in the Vienna Hofburg where the monitoring technologies used were assessed and examined with a view to developing further civilian fields of application.

3. Geneva Conference on Disarmament

After having spent twelve years in deadlock, the Geneva Conference on Disarmament (CD) eventually succeeded in overcoming its impasse. Founded in 1979, the only multilateral negotiation forum on disarmament issues comprises 65 member states. Austria joined the CD in 1996. At their meeting in May, members unanimously adopted a working programme which also covered the treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, FMCT), whose final implementation was, however, thwarted by opposition from Pakistan. In 2009, Austria held one of the six presidencies of the CD and in this capacity introduced the CD report to the UNGA.
4. Chemical Weapons Convention

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997, introduced a ban on all chemical weapons and stipulates their phased destruction. At the Second Review Conference held in The Hague in April 2008, the states parties reconfirmed their obligations arising from the Convention. With 185 states parties, 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 2008, 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 2008, Austria began its two-year membership of the OPCW Executive Council.

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, while 13 are signatories. At the Annual BTWC Experts Meetings and Meetings of States Parties, held in Geneva, deliberations focused on measures to increase biosecurity and biosafety as well as oversight, education, 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 signed the HCOC. Austria serves as the HCOC’s Central Contact (ICC) thus acting as an interface for the exchange of information including, for instance, advance notice of missile launches. Under the EU’s Joint Action aimed at supporting the HCOC, funded with around one million euros in 2008, a study on setting-up an Internet-based ICC was launched and two information events in Vienna and New York as well as an experts seminar were organised.

Chaired by Costa Rica, the eighth Regular Meeting of Subscribing States of the HCOC convened on 28 and 29 May in Vienna. Deliberations focused inter...
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alia on the reliable implementation of confidence-building measures by all Subscribing States and potential activities that could contribute to universalising the Code. In her capacity as spokesperson of the HCOC, the Code’s chair gave presentations at seminars and meetings held at UN level.

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) entered into force in 1999. Austria is one of the leading states among the 156 States Parties in the Ottawa Process and is strongly committed to promoting the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and their destruction. In this spirit, Austria continued its active contribution to the international process for the implementation of the Ottawa Convention and promoted the further implementation of the Austrian Mine Action Programme. Funding for the programme has thus been provided since 1999 and amounted to 1.2 million euros in 2009.

At its Second Review Conference, which convened in Cartagena (Colombia) from 30 November to 4 December, the Ottawa Convention presented itself as one of the most successful instruments in the fields of humanitarian international law and disarmament. Ten years after the Convention’s entry into force, both use and production of anti-personnel mines have clearly declined, while trade has almost been brought to a halt. Major stockpiles have been destroyed and large contaminated areas have been cleared of mines. This has translated into a marked reduction in the number of new victims, which declined from 35,000 to 17,000 annually. Assistance to mine victims remains one of the Convention’s top priorities under the Cartagena Action Plan, with the economic and social reintegration of victims representing the most important challenge.

2. Cluster Munitions

Implementing one of its foreign policy priorities, Austria has actively advocated the ban under international law of cluster munitions, which are extremely dangerous weapons to civilians due to their effect on wide areas and the high number of unexploded ordnance. With this in mind, the Oslo Process was launched in 2007 by Austria, Ireland, the Holy See, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and Peru. Deliberations on a draft convention based on the results of the Vienna Conference on Cluster Munitions, held in December 2007, were continued. In May 2008, the text of a Convention on Cluster Munitions was adopted at the Dublin Conference on Cluster Munitions. In
December 2008, the Convention was signed by 94 states in Oslo. Austria ratified this agreement on 2 April, becoming the sixth state to do so. The Convention is expected to enter into force in spring 2010 following the 30th ratification.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions is the most important disarmament treaty since the Ottawa Convention of 1997 and marks an essential further development of international humanitarian law. It provides for a categorical ban on the use, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions which cause inacceptable suffering among civilians. The Convention covers all types of cluster munitions currently in use. Also due to Austria’s efforts, new forward-looking standards were set in the field of victims’ assistance.

The large possessor and producer states of cluster munitions also participated in 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), which ended in November without having produced notable 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. The destabilising accumulation and transfer of SALW are closely related to the rising number of internal conflicts and the high level of violence and crime, even after conflicts have ended. It is Austria’s objective to contain these disastrous consequences and take preliminary measures against SALW, by inter alia advocating this cause in the relevant UN bodies and other multilateral organisations. To this end, Austria has also supported regional meetings under the UN Programme of Action.

III. Export Control Regimes

1. Multilateral Export Controls

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

The relevant regimes in the nuclear context are the Vienna-based Zangger Committee (ZC) which comprises 37 members and the Nuclear Suppliers
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Group (NSG). 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 as defined by the NPT. At the NSG’s Plenary Meeting on 11 and 12 June in Budapest, Iceland became the 46th Participating Government to join the NSG. Against the background of growing proliferation concerns the NSG decided to resume the efforts aimed at strengthening the NSG’s supply conditions, which had been launched by Austria and the United Kingdom in 2003 but were suspended in 2006. At its Vienna meeting on 17 and 18 November, the Consultative Group reached a preliminary agreement on the introduction of such a strengthened regime relating only to nuclear enrichment and re-processing. This agreement still requires confirmation by the 2010 Plenary to be chaired by New Zealand. Furthermore, it was decided to comprehensively revise the technical NSG export control lists.

The Australia Group (AG), which currently comprises 41 members, endeavours to ensure, by means of export controls, that certain products will not contribute to the development of chemical and biological weapons.

The 34-partner Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) rests on adherence to guidelines governing the controlled proliferation of nuclear-weapons-capable rocket and missile technology (missiles with guidance systems and cruise missiles). The regime’s goal is to prevent the proliferation of military technology while at the same time not to impede national space programmes. At their Plenary Meeting in Rio de Janeiro from 5 to 13 November, the partner countries exchanged information on issues relating to the export of missile and rocket technologies and discussed threats and risks posed to the MTCR.

Founded in 1997, the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), 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 and enhancing transparency and accountability. The WA, which comprises 40 participating states, attaches particular importance to engaging in a substantial and informed exchange of views on regional analyses involving the examination of potentially destabilising accumulations of conventional weapons in certain destinations or regions. Besides the analysis of current and future threats to regional and international security and stability, discussions within the group focused on the central topic of updating and adapting the existing control lists and guidelines to the technological state-of-the-art, market trends and developments in the international security field. The WA also organised its traditional information events aimed at third countries, international organisations and industry.

2. Arms Trade Control Treaty

The fact that irresponsible trading in arms has negative impacts on stability, security and human rights as well as on sustainable economic and devel-
Export Control Regimes

devment policies remains uncontested. Austria and all partners within the EU have therefore been pushing for years for an internationally coordinated approach reflected in an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Following the completion of work undertaken by the group of government experts in 2008, the UNGA’s Open-ended Working Group met in New York in March and July. Adopting UNGA resolution 64/48 in December, which provides for the convention of a United Nations conference in July 2012, members agreed for the first time on a concrete time schedule for the elaboration of an Arms Trade Treaty.

Based on an EU Council decision, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) held worldwide seminars and workshops aimed at establishing strong supra-regional support for an ATT. As part of this project, two-day conferences were organised in Dakar, Mexico City, Kuala Lumpur and Addis Ababa. The goal of these events was to involve responsible authorities, international and local NGOs, industry and the media with a view to gaining the greatest possible level of local support. The regional event for Europe and the concluding final conference are scheduled to take place in Vienna in February 2010.

3. National Export Controls

In Austria, 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 its Annex – which corresponds to the current version of the Wassenaar Control Lists and the items listed in the agreed EU Common Military List – and the War Material Regulation.

Moreover, Austria is committed to adhering to the Common Position defining common rules governing the control of exports of military technology and equipment, adopted by the EU Council in December 2008. This legally binding Common Position marked the completion of the reform of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. It contributed substantially to further harmonising national export regimes and implementation activities and also had a positive impact on the EU’s positioning in the ATT process.

Under the 2008 Joint Action in support of EU activities promoting the control of arms exports and the principles and criteria of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports among third countries, events for the states in the respective region were organised in Kiev, Tirana and Tbilisi. Acknowledging the benefits of such a formally structured process of information events, the EU Council decided in December to extend these activities. The beneficiaries of this EU effort include the South Eastern European countries, the North African and Mediterranean partners, the Eastern European and Caucasian partners of the European Neighbourhood Policy, and Ukraine. A comprehensive project evaluation will mark the completion of the two-year process.
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Quality and transparency of the consolidated Annual Report, which is the main source of information on actual EU-wide exports, were further improved. The 11th Annual Report for the year 2008 was published in November.
G. International Protection of Human Rights

I. Introduction

The worldwide implementation of international human rights standards is a key concern for Austria. As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Austria specifically advocated the protection of human rights, particularly the rights of women and children in conflict and post-conflict situations. Further priorities of Austria’s pro-active commitment within international and regional organisations and in bilateral contacts include the situation of internally displaced persons, the protection of minorities, human rights education, the promotion of democratisation and the strengthening of the rule of law. Austria strongly supports the abolition of the death penalty and the fight against human trafficking. Austria also places special emphasis on strengthening civil society as well as on the implementation and propagation of international humanitarian law.

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 addressed by the EU human rights directors in the Council Working Party on Human Rights (COHOM), in cooperation with geographical Council Working Parties and the Human Rights and Democracy Committee chaired by the European Commission. Austria has continued to focus its efforts on ensuring better integration of human rights in all EU policy areas and has successfully advocated the continued incorporation of human rights into EU crisis management activities. Austria also supported the establishment of new EU human rights dialogues with all Central Asian states. Following the appointment of its first Director in March 2008, the Vienna-based EU Agency for Fundamental Rights is now fully operational.

1.1. The Integration of Human Rights in the ESDP

Austria strongly supports the integration of human rights in all areas of ESDP activity, particularly with a view to promoting the rights of women and children within EU crisis management. In this spirit, the 2006 checklist for the integration of the protection of children’s rights into EU crisis management, which was prepared by the Austrian EU Council Presidency, was revised and further improved, as was the checklist to ensure gender mainstreaming in the planning and conduct of ESDP operations drafted in the same year.
1.2. European Union Guidelines on Human Rights

The EU Guidelines on Human Rights are documents adopted by the EU Council. Each of these Guidelines comprises a catalogue of measures for the EU’s permanent commitment towards third countries on individual human rights issues. Under the **Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child**, ten specific pilot programmes were developed for Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Ghana, India, Iran, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya and Russia. In 2009, nine of these ten programmes were adopted. Austria was actively involved in the establishment of the **Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict** adopted in December 2003. As a member of the relevant EU Task Force, Austria also participated in preparing projects and actions aimed at both implementing and updating these Guidelines. The close cooperation with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, was continued.

The worldwide abolition of the death penalty is a priority of Austrian and EU human rights policy, the basis for which is given by the **Guidelines to EU Policy towards Third Countries on the Death Penalty**. The tools used by Austria and its partners in the EU to pursue this goal include demarches and public statements as well as increasingly addressing this topic in regional and international bodies. In 2009, the EU focused especially on 14 countries (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guatemala, Ghana, India, Jordan, Liberia, Mali, Malawi, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Tunisia and Zambia). Some of these countries are currently in the process of either abolishing the death penalty or suspending its application, while others are considering either a reintroduction or increased use of capital punishment. On a bilateral basis, the FMEIA works towards the suspension of death sentences in numerous countries.

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 consistently work towards convincing third countries and contribute to international fora dedicated to promoting the worldwide eradication of torture. In implementing the Guidelines the EU has focused its bilateral efforts on countries where torture is particularly prevalent. At multilateral level, the EU’s efforts are focused on strengthening the **UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture** and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (SPT). The topic is addressed in political dialogues and in the EU human rights dialogues with third countries. The European Union also makes targeted use of demarches and intervenes in individual cases. Specific problems countries may have in the handling of apprehended persons are addressed directly and support is offered in resolving such problems on a case-by-case basis. Countries that have not yet signed the UN Convention against Torture are invited to do so and discussions on issues related to its effective implementation are held with those countries that have already signed the Convention. Furthermore, the EU also addresses
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accusations of torture in connection with individuals, with the relevant demarches being issued by the respective local EU delegations.

In cooperation with the respective local embassies, the EU has developed local strategies for the effective implementation of the **Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders** in more than 80 states. These strategies focus on raising awareness of the guidelines in the respective countries and on intensifying cooperation with local human rights defenders. In over 200 cases, the EU issued demarches in support of threatened human rights defenders.

The activities of the newly established EU Task Force on the EU **Guidelines on Combating Violence against Women**, which were adopted in December 2008, currently focus on preparing a strategy for their implementation. Austria is both initiator and member of this Task Force.

### 1.3. European Agency for Fundamental Rights

The appointment of the first Director of the **European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**, Morten Kjaerum, in March 2008 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 where the FRA’s future strategic orientation and thematic priorities were discussed. With a view to quickly establishing the FRA as a central player in EU fundamental law issues, Director Kjaerum strove to develop close links and joint strategies with EU institutions, regional human rights institutions and civil society across Europe. The Agency’s staff was also increased to include numerous experts on fundamental law issues.

Austria supports a strong FRA and cooperates closely with the Agency. By publishing studies on homophobia and discrimination, the rights of the child and child trafficking, the situation of Roma and anti-Semitism and by providing counselling services on draft legislation to EU institutions, the FRA has already contributed to improving the protection of fundamental rights in Europe. Together with the Swedish EU Council Presidency, the FRA organised a European Fundamental Rights Conference on the topic of discrimination in Stockholm in December.

The eleventh **EU Human Rights Forum**, a platform promoting the exchange of opinions and sharing of experiences amongst EU Member States, the Union’s institutions and civil society representatives, was held in Stockholm in July and – against the background of the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child – dealt with violence against children. Working Groups were held on violence against women, human rights defenders and best practice approaches for non-discriminatory legislation.

The **human rights country fact sheets** – which are based on an Austrian initiative – were further updated by the heads of EU missions in third countries. The main responsibility for implementing concrete projects and programmes
in the field of EU human rights policy lies with the **European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)**. Work aimed at preparing an EU strategy on promoting democracy in third countries was successfully completed.

The European Commission has been conducting **EU election monitoring missions** since 2000. Training seminars for election observers are organised under the Network for Enhanced Electoral and Democracy Support (NEEDS), a project set up by the EU. The Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung, ÖSFK) is one of the venues for such training seminars. In 2009, about 30 Austrians participated in EU election monitoring missions in Afghanistan, Bolivia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guinea Bissau, Lebanon, Malawi and Mozambique.

### 2. Structured Human Rights Dialogues

In December 2001, the EU adopted the **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.

The **EU-China Structured Human Rights Dialogue**, which was launched in 1995, was continued in May and November. In addition to the meetings at government level, expert seminars were held involving participants from the academic world, NGOs and representatives of the EU and China. The issues addressed in the Dialogue included the ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by China, cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms, reform of the “re-education through work” system, reform of the judicial system, developments in Tibet and Xinjiang, the persecution of supporters of democratic movements, religious groups and the Falun Gong movement, as well as issues such as the death penalty, the prohibition of torture and religious freedom. The EU also regularly addresses individual human rights cases (see Chapter G.II.1.2.). In this context Austria particularly supported the case of the Tibetan film maker Dhondup Wangchen who is currently in a Chinese prison.

The **EU-Iran Human Rights Dialogue** was established at the end of 2002, but came to a virtual standstill after its fourth round in June 2004. During Austria’s EU Presidency in 2006, efforts were undertaken to resume the dialogue but remained unsuccessful due to the alarming human rights situation in Iran. The human rights situation was also criticised in a resolution co-introduced by Austria and adopted by the 64th 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 ninth and tenth rounds of **EU-Russia Human Rights Consultations** were held on 26 May and on 4 and 5 November. The meetings dealt with current issues such as the situation in Northern Caucasus and the increasing violence against human rights activists in this region, impunity, freedom of the media, expression and assembly. Cooperation in multilateral fora was expanded to also include topics such as human rights education in the framework of peacekeeping operations, protection of children, anti-discrimination and minorities. Both rounds were preceded by meetings between the EU delegation and Russian NGOs.

In implementing the **EU-Central Asia Strategy**, **Human Rights Dialogues** with all five Central Asian states were held. The meeting with **Uzbekistan** took place on 9 June, followed by **Turkmenistan** on 30 June, **Tajikistan** on 23 September, **Kyrgyzstan** on 13 October and **Kazakhstan** on 21 October.

The fourth round of the **EU-AU Human Rights Dialogue** and the first EU-AU civil society seminar were held in Brussels on 20 April. The meeting’s conclusions confirmed the willingness to increase cooperation in international fora, including coordination of both sides in the lead-up to meetings held by the UN Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the UNGA, as well as the readiness to launch joint initiatives on UNSC resolution 1325 and on the topic of torture.

### III. Human Rights in the United Nations

The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in 1993, resulted in a strengthening of 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 human rights education activities directed at all levels of society.

#### 1. The Human Rights Council

In its third year of existence, the **Human Rights Council (HRC)** completed the process of procedural reform and was able to shift the focus of its activities fully to content and implementing its mandate. Set up as a successor to the **Commission on Human Rights (CHR)**, the Human Rights Council was, however, still not able to fully meet the high expectations placed on it. With meetings taking place several times a year and the Universal Periodic Review, which involves a review of the human rights records of all states, the new institution is endowed with instruments that would enable it to respond quickly and in a credible and effective manner to human rights crises emerging around the world. However, it has not succeeded in using these tools in
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the best possible way. The twelve regular sessions and twelve special sessions held in the course of the year were frequently characterised by a lack of cooperation among the various regional groups, particularly when deliberations focused on topics such as defamation of religions, freedom of expression and racism as well as on individual country situations, especially on the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. Furthermore, the majority of the HRC’s members continue to hold a generally negative view on country mandates.

As the seats on the HRC are distributed along regional lines, the Western European and Others Group (WEOG), to which the EU Member States belong, only have a total of eight of the 47 seats. In spite of this evident disadvantage in terms of negotiating position, the EU has spoken up for substantial and effective results that would enable the Human Rights Council to live up to the key role it is to play in the field of universal human rights work. In this context, the EU continues to firmly oppose any weakening of the Council caused by delegations and/or regional groups.

At the tenth regular session, held from 2 to 27 March, dialogues were held with the Special Rapporteurs on Human Rights dealing with torture, terrorism, minorities, internally displaced persons, religious freedom, human rights defenders, prevention of genocides and Myanmar, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Occupied Palestinian Territories. While presenting her annual report, the new United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navanethem Pillay (South Africa), was faced with massive criticism by the countries of the South focused on the composition of the High Commissioner’s Office, which in their view continues to be characterised by regional imbalance. As in the past, attempts by states to prevent the discussion of country situations by the EU gave rise to controversy. The EU resolutions involving an extension of the mandates of the Special Rapporteurs on the Human Rights Situation in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and in Myanmar were, however, eventually adopted. Regarding Somalia, the West had to accept a six-month transitional solution. With respect to the country mandate on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it was, however, impossible for the West to overcome the strong and consolidated resistance put up by the DRC and supported by the entire African Group. The mandate thus had to be abandoned. Instead, it was agreed to entrust a group of thematic special rapporteurs with preparing a report for the next year. Although the disagreements between the West and the OIC on topics such as religious freedom and defamation of religions continued, the EU resolution on religious freedom was adopted by a narrow majority. In contrast to this, the Austrian national initiative on “Human Rights in the Administration of Justice”, remained free of controversies and was adopted by consensus.

One of the highlights of the eleventh regular session, held from 2 to 18 June, was the successful extension of the Sudan country mandate, achieved through a ballot process in which many African states also cast a vote in favour of
the motion. In general, this session was less controversial, partly due to the fact that several difficult topics had been postponed to later sessions. In part this was also attributable to the first-time participation of the new member USA and the associated “Obama spirit”. Attempts by numerous OIC members and African states to either systematically weaken resolutions dealing with women (violence against women, maternal mortality) or exclude them from the HRC’s mandate proved negative. At the end of the eleventh session, the Permanent Representative of Belgium, Ambassador Alex van Meeuwen, was appointed new President of the UN Human Rights Council.

At the twelfth regular session, held from 14 September to 2 October, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights addressed the human rights situation in several countries, including the situation of Roma in Central Europe. The main topics on the session’s agenda were the consideration of reports under the Universal Periodic Review in the plenary, interactive dialogues with Special Rapporteurs and a panel discussion on human rights of migrants which proved controversial. The negotiations on country situations went more smoothly, which was to some extent attributable to the agreement of some of the affected countries (Somalia, Cambodia) or lack of support on the part of others (Honduras, Myanmar). In terms of content, the adoption of the resolution on freedom of expression/religious defamation proposed jointly by the USA and Egypt gave rise to controversy as some legal concepts that were important to the EU were included only later in the text following complaints by the EU. The Russian initiative on “traditional values“, which was this time adopted by voting and had met with opposition by the Western States because of the associated risk of a watering down of the universality of human rights, marked another negative development.

Two of the four special sessions held in 2009 again dealt with the situation in the Middle East, the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and were marked by the habitual controversies. A revote had to be taken on one resolution which also resulted in a split in the EU’s position. The special session on “The Impact of the Global Economic and Financial Crisis on the Universal Realization and Effective Enjoyment of Human Rights” was a special focus session whose relevance for the HRC was, however, questioned by the Western States. The degree to which Western countries are outnumbered by the coalitions of developing countries became apparent at the special session on the human rights situation in Sri Lanka, which was held at the initiative of the EU. Following the inclusion of amendments forced by Cuba and Sri Lanka, the text of the resolution ended on an overly positive note which led the EU/WEOG to withdraw support for its own text.

2. The General Assembly

At the 64th session of the UNGA, the Third Committee dealt with more than 60 resolutions. From the EU’s point of view, the adoption of the EU initia-
tives on the human rights situations in Burma/Myanmar and in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as well as the Canadian resolution on Iran co-sponsored by the EU – each with better voting results than in the previous year and without motions for non-action – was a success. The resolution on the Rights of the Child, traditionally introduced by the EU together with the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, won a record number of co-sponsors (138) and was for the first time adopted by consensus, as the USA refrained from putting it to the vote. The USA also enabled the first adoption by consensus of the Cuban resolution on the Right to Food, which was supported by numerous EU Member States as co-sponsors. The resolution on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief was adopted by consensus, while the OIC initiative on Combating Defamation of Religions lost support.

The issue of sexual orientation and gender identity which was raised by the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism, Martin Scheinin, in his report to the UNGA and in a General Comment by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, provoked controversy. By putting it to the vote, the African Group forced the deletion of the fact that note had been taken of these documents from the resolutions on the international conventions on human rights and on human rights in countering terrorism, which had previously been adopted by consensus. Other human rights issues, addressed in the resolutions on racism and cultural diversity for instance, were met with a formation of voting blocks of the “South” against the “North”, 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.

Austria took an active role in the negotiations within the EU and in informal consultations. As well as devoting particular attention to following the EU initiatives and country resolutions, Austria focused on the resolutions on torture, internally displaced persons, human rights in countering terrorism, racism, gender, guidelines for the alternative care of children, realising the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities, drugs, human trafficking and crime prevention. In its national capacity, Austria participated in the interactive dialogues with the Special Rapporteur on torture, Manfred Nowak, and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons, Walter Kälin, and contributed to the EU declarations. Furthermore, Austria supported the clear statements made by the EU on defending the special rapporteurs’ independence and that of the bodies and mechanisms pertaining to the various human rights agreements and conventions.

In cooperation with one supra-regional group of countries at a time, the Swedish EU Council Presidency organised events dealing with the death penalty (as the EU will introduce its initiative on the abolition of the death
penalty at the 65th session of the UNGA) and on serious human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

3. The Commission on the Status of Women

At its 53rd session, held in New York from 2 to 13 March, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) considered “The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS”. For all items set out in the conclusions on the priority theme (including on sexual and reproductive health and rights), the EU held a common negotiation position and succeeded in substantially influencing the outcome. The session also adopted resolutions on girls and HIV/AIDS, strengthening the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the CSW’s working methods, and on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women (the latter by voting). An interactive expert panel considered “The gender perspectives of the financial crisis”. The Austrian delegation was headed by Federal Minister Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek.

IV. Human Rights in the OSCE

See 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 in 2009 as well as the enhanced visibility and public awareness of the human rights system went hand in hand with a notable increase in individual applications to the European Court of Human Rights. While some 4,000 individual applications were introduced in 1989, their number had risen to as many as around 57,000 in 2009, with an overwhelming majority being inadmissible. As of 31 December, almost 119,000 individual applications were pending before the ECHR, which is, however, 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 adopted Protocol No.14 to 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 at its 114th session held on
12 May 2006. Ratification by all 47 Member States of the Council of Europe is necessary for the Protocol to enter into effect. As a temporary solution, Protocol No. 14bis – which includes some elements from Protocol No. 14 – came into force in October.

The **European Commissioner for Human Rights** Thomas Hammarberg (Sweden), who took office in 2006 and whose mandate includes counselling, advising and raising awareness of the issue of human rights in the Member States, paid visits to Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Lithuania, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA.

In 2007, Frenchman Jean-Paul Costa took office as President of the ECHR. Elisabeth Steiner has been the Austrian judge at the ECHR since 2001. Stefan Karner is a member of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI). Succeeding Renate Kicker, Julia Kozma became the Austrian member of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment of Punishment (CPT).

### 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, with South Africa as an observer) that was established in 1998/1999 in the course of the Ottawa process for the preparation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The HSN’s Chair rotates annually. 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. During its term as Chair of the HSN from July 2002 to May 2003, Austria put a special emphasis on human rights education as well as children and armed conflict, leading to the publication of the HSN Manual on Human Rights Education “Understanding Human Rights”, which has been translated into fifteen languages, and a training curriculum to strengthen the rights of the child.

Deliberations at the **Ministerial Meeting in Dublin** on 26 and 27 May focused on the implementation of UNSC resolution 1325 on women, peace and security as the key theme defined by the Irish Chair. At this meeting, Costa Rica assumed annual chairmanship of the HSN. On the margins of the UNGA, the HSN held a **Ministerial Meeting** on 27 September on the topic of peace and justice. The ministers adopted a declaration in which the HSN committed itself to intensifying dialogue and cooperation with third countries, the UN
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system and other international and regional organisations, combating impunity and ensuring crime prosecution.

VII. Priorities

1. Human Rights of Children

The promotion and protection of the rights of the child are of central concern within Austrian foreign policy. In this spirit, Austria made the rights of the child one of the priorities for its membership in the UN Security Council and contributed substantially to the adoption of UNSC resolution 1882, which extends the protection of children in armed conflict. In the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Austria thus consistently underlined the importance of both protecting and promoting the rights of children in armed conflict.

Austria has for many years been pushing for the incorporation of 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 Human Rights Council, Austria contributes proactively to the Open-ended Working Group to Explore the Possibility of Elaborating an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child to elaborate an individual applications procedure. At its first session in December, the Working Group considered fundamental issues relating to such a procedure.

In line with Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the conclusions of the Second Periodic Report under the Convention relating to the implementation of the Convention of the Right of the Child of January 2005, Austria submitted the third and fourth reports on the Convention’s implementation in August.

With the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (Österreichisches Studienzentrum für Frieden und Konfliktlösung, ÖSFK), Austria is home to one of the leading training centres for the protection of children. Regular training programmes on the protection of and relations with children in armed conflict are held at the ÖSFK to prepare Austrian participants in international missions. The training seminars conducted by the FMEIA for Austrian participants in international peace missions dealt specifically with the protection of and relations with children in armed conflict. Austria supports projects in many countries for the reintegration of child soldiers and children otherwise affected by war through contributions to UN organisations or by way of bilateral development cooperation. In January, the FMEIA conducted a workshop aimed at Child Protection Advisors for the UN Secretariat’s Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO).
International Protection of Human Rights

2. Human Rights of Women

Strengthening the rights of women is a central element of Austrian human rights policy. In this context, Austria pays particular attention to promoting measures directed at combating violence against women and programmes aimed at actively involving women in peace processes.

Austria supports the UN Secretary-General’s system-wide campaign to combat violence against women by making financial contributions to the UN database on violence against women, launched in March, and to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women. Austria also makes contributions to the Gender-Directorate set up by the AU. As a member of the EU Task Force to Combat Violence against Women, Austria supports the comprehensive implementation of the EU Guidelines on violence against women and girls, adopted in December 2008.

At the end of November, Austria celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) with a ceremonial event hosted by Federal Ministers Gabriele Heinisch-Hosek and Michael Spindelegger.

Together with its partners in the EU, Austria strongly supports the consolidation of the existing UN gender-related entities into a composite entity headed by an Under-Secretary-General and is pushing for swift implementation of this reform.

As a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Austria advocated stronger incorporation of the rights of women in the Security Council’s daily work and contributed actively to the two debates on women, peace and security held in June and August. Furthermore, Austria contributed pro-actively to the negotiations on Security Council resolutions 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) and particularly supported the establishment of a UN mandate on sexual violence in armed conflict.

The Second Report on the Implementation of the Austrian National Action Plan on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), which had been coordinated by the FMEIA, was submitted to the Council of Ministers in December and subsequently referred to the Austrian Parliament. The implementation report covers the period from autumn 2008 to autumn 2009 and outlines the measures taken by Austria to promote the involvement of women in peace processes and on strengthening preventive measures to protect women in armed conflict.

The Special Representative for International Women’s Issues at the FMEIA, former Federal Minister Ursula Plassnik, took part in an international colloquium on women’s empowerment in Liberia in March.
3. Fighting Racism

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The Review Conference for the 2001 Durban World Conference against Racism convened in Geneva from 20 to 24 April. The goal of the meeting was to review both the implementation of the Durban Action Plan and the UN mechanisms on combating racism. But as the conference was preceded by major differences of opinion on the content, several Western countries refrained from participating. Austria was represented by its Permanent Representative at the UN in Geneva. The only Head of State in attendance was the Iranian President Ahmadinejad. The outcome document, which had given rise to controversies in the lead-up, was eventually adopted by consensus and is considered a sound basis for further efforts to combat racism.

The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), set up by the Council of Europe, is a human rights monitoring body charged with combating racism and intolerance at European level. The Commission conducts country visits every four years and prepares recommendations; the reports are published together with national statements. In March, the ECRI paid its fourth visit to Austria.

4. Protection of Minorities

Austria has always attached great importance to the protection of minority rights and thus advocated the establishment of a body dedicated to ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities within the Human Rights Council. In this spirit, it launched the initiative to set up a Forum on Minority Issues, which 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. Each year a different topic relating to minorities is the subject of the Forum’s thematic discussions. The second meeting on 12 and 13 November was dedicated to minorities and political participation. As had been the case at the Forum’s first meeting, content was prepared by the HRC’s independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall. The more than 500 participants included government representatives and representatives from international organisations and NGOs as well as experts on minority issues who all took part on an equal footing. In her annual report to the HRC in March 2010, Gay McDougall will report on the recommendations prepared at the Forum’s second meeting.

5. Internally Displaced Persons

The protection of internally displaced persons has been one of the priority topics on Austria’s human rights policy agenda for many years. In this spirit it introduced the resolution renewing the mandate of the Special Representa-
tive of the UN Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons. The resolution, which was adopted by consensus at the Human Rights Council’s sixth session, enables Walter Kälin, who currently holds this mandate, to continue his work until 2010. In exercising his mandate, Special Representative Kälin paid visits to Chad, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kosovo, Serbia, Sri Lanka and Uganda in 2009. During his visits the Special Representative emphasised the importance of respecting the rights of internally displaced persons – such as the right to accommodation, an adequate standard of living, health care, education, safety and security – in securing sustainable peace.

An international workshop on the implementation of the Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons, adopted in 2006 by the member states of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, was held in July. Participants included Walter Kälin as well as representatives of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Austria was one of the workshop’s main supporters and participated as observer.

6. Human Rights Education

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.

In preparing the “Understanding Human Rights” manual on human rights education, Austria has provided an important tool that is used worldwide. The manual, which was also awarded special recognition in the Alliance of Civilisations’ report, has so far 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 general public can also access training material on the website of the Graz-based European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

7. International Humanitarian Law

At the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, held in 2007, the FMEIA and the Austrian Red Cross committed themselves to organising events addressing current international humanitarian law topics. In line with this commitment, a two-day seminar was organised together with the Austrian and the Swiss Red Cross in Bregenz on 1 and 2 October. Entitled “Mehr Biss für das Humanitäre Völkerrecht” (adding bite to international humanitarian law) the seminar considered ways and means for pro-
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moting a more effective implementation of international legal standards for the protection of civilians.

To mark the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Convention and the 150th anniversary of the battle of Solferino, Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger issued a press statement stressing the key role the Red Cross conventions play as a milestone in the observation of essential protection standards and the vital importance of humanitarian actors like the Red Cross movement.
H. The Humanitarian Dimension of International Relations

I. Migration and Refugee Issues

1. Migration and Refugee Movements

Along other causes such as political conflicts, economic instability, demographic, economic and social disparities as well as enhanced travel and communication possibilities, environmental destruction and climate change have come to play an increasingly important role in triggering continuously growing migration movements. Since its establishment, the UNHCR has provided protection and assistance to some 50 million people: refugees and people in refugee-like situations, asylum seekers, people who have returned to their home countries, stateless and internally displaced persons. According to estimates, around 40 million people are currently refugees or are living in refugee-like situations worldwide.

The third meeting of the Global Forum on Migration and Development was held at international level in Athens in November. The meeting, to which Austria made a substantial contribution, focused on developing measures that contribute to increased acceptance of migrants in host countries. Participants also discussed the role of development cooperation in connection with migration and prepared concepts for integrating migration policies in development strategies.

2. Migration and Refugee Policy in Austria

In its refugee and migration policy, Austria pursues a comprehensive approach, incorporating political, human rights and development policy aspects. Austria remains mainly affected by East-West migration. At EU level, Austria supports the global approach which takes into consideration migration flows via both the eastern and western Mediterranean as well as those via East and South Eastern Europe.

The European Commission stepped up its activities aimed at implementing the European Strategy on Asylum adopted at the 1999 Tampere European Council. These activities focused inter alia on achieving improved coherence in the acquis communautaire on asylum issues and on improving the overall effectiveness of the EU’s asylum system. The Union also decided to establish a European Asylum Support Office based in Malta. Austria has advocated the establishment of a common European asylum system for quite some time and also supports coordinated and close collaboration between EU Member States in this field.

In total, 15,827 applications for asylum were submitted in Austria in 2009. This corresponds to an increase of 23.25 per cent over the previous year.
The number of asylum procedures dealt with conclusively in 2009 totalled 19,764, of which 3,151 were recognised and 13,111 rejected. The remaining proceedings were discontinued or became irrelevant or the applications were withdrawn or dismissed. The most common country of origin was the Russian Federation with 3,560 applications for asylum, followed by Afghanistan (2,234), Kosovo (1,326), Georgia (976), Nigeria (838), Serbia (710), Turkey (554), Armenia (439), India (428) and Iraq (399).

3. International Organisation for Migration

The International Organisation 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 following the Second World War. IOM promotes a humane, fair and well-regulated migration policy and focuses on supporting migrants and governments in coping with migration processes. As the major international organisation in the field of migration issues, IOM employs about 6,900 people worldwide and has 127 member states, including all 27 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. As part of the structural reforms, adopted in November by the IOM Council, it was decided to make the Vienna Office one of the Organisation’s eight regional offices.

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 – as well as related crime by applying a set of targeted measures designed to reduce both supply and demand. Austria supports the UNODC’s efforts in promoting international cooperation based on a well-balanced approach towards drugs that is founded on the protection of human rights.

The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which meets annually in Vienna, is the leading UN entity in terms of implementing the UN’s drug policy. At its 52nd session (16–20 March), the CND adopted a political declaration and a plan of action in the high-level segment on 11 and 12 March. The meeting was attended by more than 1,400 delegates from 130 states, including Bolivian President Evo Morales and Queen Silvia of Sweden. Austria was represented by Federal Minister Alois Stöger. In his opening address, UNODC Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa stated that the global drug problem had been contained but not solved. The Executive
The Humanitarian Dimension of International Relations

Director emphasised that it was essential to pursue an integrated approach in combating rising crime rates related to global drug trafficking and that the two extremes of criminalising drug addicts and the full legalisation of drugs be avoided. The 52nd CND adopted 14 resolutions. Austria contributed particularly to the resolutions on cannabis seeds and money laundering in connection with drug trafficking.

The topic of HIV/AIDS also remains of great significance in 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 52nd CND confirmed the important role played by UNODC as a key UN entity in combating HIV/AIDS.

III. International Crime Prevention

The strategy pursued by Austria in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice is also aimed at strengthening the work of UNODC. 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.

After lengthy negotiations, the resolution on technical assistance in implementing international conventions and protocols related to countering terrorism, introduced by Austria, was adopted by the 18th session of the CCPCJ held from 16 to 24 April. Austria also supported the resolution on national and international efforts aimed at the reform of juvenile justice. The two-day thematic debate considered economic fraud and identity-related crime, penal reform and the reduction of prison overcrowding as well as the provision of legal assistance in criminal justice systems. In connection with this meeting, the FMEIA and UNODC organised a joint event focusing on sports and crime prevention.

Since 2009, Austria has also strongly supported UNODC’s activities in the field of combating terrorism. UNODC enjoys high esteem for its effective work as a key provider of technical support to UN Member States in implementing their statutory obligations and in building up counter-terrorism capacities.

An “International Workshop of National Counter-Terrorism Focal Points”, designed to strengthen cooperation among national counter-terrorism experts and effectively link their work to global counter-terrorism efforts, was organised by Austria together with UNODC. The workshop, which was held in Vienna on 12 and 13 October, was the first forum that brought together national focal points and counter-terrorism experts from over 100 UN Member States as well as representatives of more than 40 international
The International Criminal Court

and regional organisations and UN entities. The event met with high interest and contributed substantially to strengthening efficient cooperation at all levels in implementing the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and also offered UNODC’s Terrorism Prevention Branch the opportunity to present its work.

The fight against human trafficking continued to remain an important priority for Austrian foreign policy. Austria is state party to all relevant international legal instruments against human trafficking and strives to implement its respective international commitments through concrete actions. The Task Force on Human Trafficking, set up in 2004 and headed by the FMEIA, focuses on coordinating all relevant Austrian activities, including the sharing of information on relevant projects, early identification of trends and strengthening of cooperation among all stakeholders. At international level, the FMEIA supported thematic projects and events organised by UNODC, IOM, the OSCE and Austrian NGOs.

On 10 March, the Austrian Federal Government appointed Ambassador Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger, Director-General at the FMEIA, as the First Austrian National Coordinator on Combating Human Trafficking. The Second National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking covering the period from 2009 to 2011 was adopted by the Federal Government in May.

The FMEIA was involved in dedicated preventive efforts undertaken in more than 100 high-risk countries. All Austrian representations abroad were thus called upon to contribute proactively to combating human trafficking. Austrian Development Cooperation also made an important contribution to combating human trafficking in the countries of origin by, for instance, launching several projects aimed at strengthening the rights of victims of human trafficking. In connection with the “EU-Anti-Trafficking-Day” (18 October), the FMEIA organised a public event entitled “Gemeinsam gegen Menschenhandel – die österreichischen Aktivitäten zur Bekämpfung des Menschenhandels” (joining forces against human trafficking – Austria’s role in the fight against human trafficking) held at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy on 16 October. The press conference and the event opening which focused on trafficking in children and the strengthening of children’s rights, was attended by Federal Ministers Michael Spindelegger, Maria Fekter, Claudia Bandion-Ortner, State Secretary Christine Marek, a representative from the office of Federal Minister Gabriele Heinisch-Hossek and UNICEF Ambassador Thomas Brezina.

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 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 110 States are currently party, sets out that the ICC be 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 in question.

The following situations are currently pending with the ICC: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Central African Republic – and following referral by UNSC resolution 1593 (2005) – Darfur/Sudan. The focus of international attention was on the warrant of arrest issued against Sudanese President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir, which has as yet not been executed. This warrant of arrest is the first the ICC has ever issued against a head of state in office. This step, however, resulted in the expulsion of humanitarian aid organisations from Darfur and led to tensions arising between several African states and the African Union. The individual cases pending with the ICC are at different stages, with the execution of the arrest warrants issued against senior leaders of the LRA (Uganda situation) still being outstanding. The trial against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo and others (Congo situation) was opened. With a view to the incidents following the elections in Kenya in 2007, the Prosecutor for the first time requested authorisation to open investigations into crimes allegedly committed in relation to post-election violence.

The eighth session of the Assembly of States Party to the Rome Statute, held in The Hague from 18 to 26 November, focused on the preparatory process for the first Review Conference scheduled to be held in Kampala from 31 May to 11 June 2010. It will primarily deal with inclusion of the crime of aggression into the Rome Statute and a comprehensive stock-taking process. 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. This project was set up 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. World Trade Organisation (WTO)

The negotiations under the Doha Round (Doha Development Agenda, DDA) continued to play a central role in the activities of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Unfortunately it was not possible to achieve a political breakthrough in these negotiations as the USA in particular continued to maintain its reserved position, which was far from living up to the negotiation partners’ expectations. The lack of substantive support from a key partner in the negotiations had an inevitable impact on the process. Since political negotiations had to be postponed for the time being, the meetings in Geneva focused mainly on technical aspects. Although this approach resulted in a considerable number of meetings, the level of actual, substantial progress was rather limited. The USA, for its part, pursued a bilateral approach endeavouring to convince large emerging countries like India, China or Brazil to agree to specific concessions on industrial goods.

In the negotiation process, the dossiers of agriculture and industrial goods continued to remain key areas on which future agreement will be based. Striking 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 on the other thus still remains imperative. Progress in the other dossiers including services, trade regulations (particularly anti-dumping and fisheries subsidies), trade facilitations and intellectual property rights continues to depend on the outcome of the agriculture and industrial goods negotiations.

A global review of the Aid for Trade initiative – which was launched by the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in 2005 and is decoupled from the Doha Round – took place in July. The review mainly focused on the concrete implementation of trade-related aid projects in developing countries with particular attention being given to the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF) programme that was tailored to meet the specific needs of LDCs.

The Seventh WTO Ministerial Conference convened in Geneva from 30 November to 2 December and was relatively uneventful. As DDA-related discussions were not considered conducive because of the prevailing major differences of opinion, deliberations focused on taking stock of multilateral trade policy at the political level and developing ideas for the future. The most important outcome in terms of content was the enabling of a DDA-related stock-taking process at ministerial level scheduled for 2010. At an organisational level, it was decided to refrain from holding major events, such as those in Hong Kong or Cancún, and to focus on a smaller work-oriented format instead.

The satisfactory completion of the banana dispute that had been ongoing between the EU and the Latin American suppliers (including Colombia, Costa
Rica, Ecuador and Panama) and the USA for almost twenty years including a dozen formal legal disputes, marked a success for the EU in terms of trade policy. The settlement provides for a gradual cut in the import tariff on bananas from Latin America from currently 176 euros per tonne to 114 euros per tonne in 2017. The ACP countries, whose preferential trade advantage is somewhat diminished by this agreement, will be granted additional financial support by the EU. For the EU this agreement also meant the settlement of the tropical products chapter in the DDA agricultural negotiations.

Membership of the WTO remains steady at 153 states and with no increase in 2009. The accession of Montenegro – which had effectively completed its accession negotiations in December 2008 – and other candidate countries (like Serbia for instance) was blocked by Ukraine with exaggerated liberalisation demands. Russia surprised the negotiators in June announcing that from now on it would be striving to join the WTO in a customs union together with Belarus and Kazakhstan (in force from 1 January 2010). Aside from considerable doubts with regard to its legal viability, such an approach would inevitably lead to massive delays in this important trade partner’s accession procedure.

II. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)

1. International Economy and Finances

The OECD’s activities were largely dominated by the economic and financial crisis. The Strategic Response to the Financial and Economic Crisis, prepared by the OECD last year, was further developed and guidelines for terminating the extraordinary state support to financial markets and institutions (exit strategy) were presented. The OECD also repeated its warning against protectionism in global trade and emphasised the importance of aligning stimulus measures with long-term growth.

The G20 invited the OECD to collaborate on identifying approaches for countering crises. The OECD’s contributions relate to energy issues, international transparency of tax information and specific labour market and trade issues.

2. Austria and Banking Secrecy

Following the request from the G20 in 2008 that the OECD continue its work on the exchange of tax information, the Secretariat published a “Progress Report on the Jurisdictions Surveyed by the OECD Global Forum in Implementing the Internationally Agreed Tax Standards” shortly before the London G20 Summit in April. In the lead-up to the publication of this progress report, Austria had notified the OECD that it was withdrawing its reservation on the exchange of information for tax purposes (Article 26 paragraph 1 OECD Model Tax Convention).
The entry into force of the Law Implementing Mutual Administrative Assistance in Tax Matters, Federal Law Gazette I No. 102/2009, at the beginning of September enabled the international exchange of tax information. By the end of the year, Austria had already concluded 17 agreements on the exchange of tax information, thus clearly exceeding the goal of twelve set by the OECD in its Progress Report of April. Austria expects to sign further such agreements in 2010.

3. OECD Economic Survey of Austria

The Economic Survey of Austria, published by the OECD every second year, was again due in 2009. This time the survey focused on the Austrian education system. Following a phase of constructive cooperation between the OECD Secretariat and the relevant Austrian authorities, the survey was presented in Vienna on 2 July. The OECD identified a need for reform with respect to the sharing of responsibilities between the federal and the province levels as well as in the field of curricula. The OECD surveyors also recommended enrolling children with migration background at an early stage in pre-school education with a view to enhancing their level of integration. Regarding the pension system, the OECD urges Austria not to undermine earlier reform efforts and to strive particularly to harmonise pension provisions for civil servants employed by the federal and provincial authorities, to counteract early retirement and to introduce a demographically determined sustainability factor into pension calculations.

4. Impacts of the Financial and Economic Crisis on Employment

At the end of September, the OECD Employment and Labour Ministers met to discuss labour market and social policy measures aimed at tackling the jobs crisis. While policy packages launched in response to the economic downturn varied OECD-wide, the Member countries agreed to continue with the measures adopted although initial signs of economic recovery were emerging. Ministers also recognised that the automatic stabilisers, which had been subject to heavy criticism in the years prior to the crisis, played a considerable role in cushioning the impact of the economic downturn. This held true for both access to appropriate and effective safety nets aimed at reducing the risk of poverty and for measures directed at sustaining demand for labour (short-time work) and upgrading workers’ skills with a view to meeting the requirements of green growth. Against the background of the severity of the economic downturn, even public employment programmes were less categorically rejected than in the past.

The OECD’s future activities will deal inter alia with contributions to the discussions on the role and development of inequalities in the labour market.
and their root causes (greater wage flexibility), a critical assessment of the stimulus strategies, comprehensive education versus specific training, the risk of negative incentives due to the focus on particular sectors within the labour force and the need to prepare a new, sustainable growth, production and development model.

5. Environmental Policy and Sustainability in the OECD

In 2009, climate change again played a key role in the OECD’s environmental policy. The main topic on the agenda of the High Level Meeting on Environment and Development that convened on 28 and 29 May, was integrating climate change adaptation into development cooperation. Deliberations dealt with the implementation of water supply and sanitation projects and focused more specifically on sustainable funding of adaptation projects in developing countries and on the fact that integrating proactive and preventive climate protection policies into development cooperation will help avoid higher costs in the future.

The analysis of opportunity costs (cost of inaction) in the field of climate protection has become the OECD’s most important contribution to the global climate discussion, which was also reflected in the expertise it contributed to the G20 summit and to preparations for the COP15 in Copenhagen. The goal for green house gas reduction measures is that they be as cost-effective as possible and also achievable through various instruments (i.e. being both market-oriented and command-and-control oriented). According to the OECD, the focus needs to be on fixing a CO2 price that is defined using a broad-based approach covering all countries, sectors and green house gases. Should no countervailing measures be launched, models prepared by the OECD predict a global increase in green house gas emissions of around 70 per cent by 2050.

Against this background, the OECD recommends adopting a green focus and dedicated its Ministerial Council Meeting on 24 and 25 June to “Building a Stronger, Cleaner and Fairer World Economy”. A declaration on a strategy for green growth – the second major thematic priority in the field of environmental policy – was adopted. An interim report on this second priority, which cuts across all topics, is scheduled for 2010. Ministers committed themselves to resisting calls for protectionism and to promoting integrity and transparency in the conduct of international business and finance. Another central element was the commitment to the important role played by dedicated instruments in the promotion of green investments and measures against imminent climate change, specifically in the field of development policy.

6. Enlargement and Enhanced Engagement

In 2009, the OECD held accession negotiations with Chile, Estonia, Israel, Slovenia and Russia. The negotiations with Chile were successfully con-
The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) concluded in December. Under the leitmotif of Enhanced Engagement, the OECD also strives to expand its relations with Brazil, China, India, Indonesia and South Africa and enable the structured participation of these countries in committees and peer reviews. Furthermore, the OECD seeks to strengthen its global ties by granting third countries observer status in its committees, further expanding the thematic Global Forums, intensifying regional programmes (including MENA, Eurasia Competitiveness Programme and Southeast Europe Investment Committee) and reaching out to cooperate with other international organisations.

7. Selected Publications

The annual Economic Policy Reforms – Going for Growth report contains recommendations on structural reform for each of the individual OECD Member countries as well as for the European Union. In this report the OECD has for the first time made human well-being the focus of its analysis.

In The Financial Crisis: Reforms and Exit Strategies, the OECD considers the reasons and root causes leading to the financial crisis, equity requirements and problems in connection with banks’ business structures and banking supervision.

The 2009 Employment Outlook is largely dedicated to the impact of the financial and economic crisis on the labour market. The publication discusses the rise in unemployment rates in most of the OECD countries and the potential contributions of labour and social policies to managing the crisis.

Pensions at a Glance 2009 gives an overview of key indicators for the development of retirement income systems in OECD countries. Despite the massive losses registered by private (funded) pension systems, the OECD continued to hold the view that the crisis affected all of the pension systems’ pillars and that private pensions remain a key element of future pension systems.

Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Co-operation: Policy Guidance is a policy guidebook on optimal integration of climate change adaptation into development policies. The publication identifies a policy package consisting of national, sector and project related approaches and outlines the cost-effective implementation of these measures.

Against the background of a potential doubling of greenhouse gas emissions by the middle of the 21st century, The Economics of Climate Change Mitigation: Policies and Options for Global Action Beyond 2012 analyses the most efficient measures to prevent such a scenario.

8. International Energy Agency

The meeting of the International Energy Agency (IEA), held in Paris on 14 and 15 October, was attended by the energy ministers of its 28 member coun-
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tries and, for the first time, the IEA partner countries China, India and Russia. In a Joint Statement with each of the three partner countries, the IEA agreed on cooperation programmes extending over the next two years. An agreement on data transfer and cooperation in the field of statistical training was reached with India, while cooperation in the field of energy efficiency indicators will be continued with Russia. The IEA’s activities focused on meeting the challenges posed by the financial and economic crisis and its impact on sustainable energy policy against the background of mounting international concern about the effect of CO2 emissions on climate change. These priorities were also reflected in the IEA’s contributions to the G8 summit in L’Aquila (8 to 10 June) and the G20 summit in Pittsburgh (24 and 25 September).
J. Global Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Topics relating to the environment and sustainable development are among the most dynamic in the international context. Against the background of the major challenges posed by climate change, food shortages, loss of both biodiversity and the natural resource basis, it is essential that concerted and decisive action be taken at global level. The vital importance of including environmental issues in a more sustainable manner in the global political agenda has become increasingly evident.

I. Follow-up to the 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development

The 17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) convened in New York from 4 to 15 May. Deliberations focused on topics relating to the third implementation cycle of the Johannesburg agenda: agriculture, rural development, draught, desertification and Africa’s sustainable development. Policy recommendations dealing with these topics were negotiated and adopted. Against the background of the global food crisis it was also stressed that additional support for sustainable agriculture was necessary for Africa.

II. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

The 25th Session of the UNEP Governing Council was held at the same time as the Global Ministerial Environment Forum (GMEF) in Nairobi from 16 to 20 February. The GMEF’s outcomes on “Global Crises: National Chaos?” (Green Economy Initiative – “Global Green New Deal”) and “International Environmental Governance” were promising. The segment on UN reform largely focused on the ongoing process of UN reform and particularly on the topic of international environmental governance. Efforts aimed at improving the integration of environmental issues into the UN system and enhancing their system-wide acceptance were generally supported. The Governing Council deliberated on the programme of work and budget for 2010–2011. This new programme of work takes its bearings on the six priorities, which were laid down for the first time in the Medium-term Strategy 2010–2013 and also form the basis for the six new sub-programmes: climate change, environmental disasters and conflicts, ecosystem management, environmental governance, harmful substances and hazardous waste, and resource efficiency – sustainable production and consumption. The Governing Council adopted 17 decisions. The landmark decision to launch negotiations on preparing a new international environmental treaty on the global reduction of mercury emissions marked the biggest success at this year’s Governing Council meeting.
III. Global Environmental Protection Agreements

The 15th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the fifth Conference of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol met in parallel in Copenhagen from 7 to 18 December. Deliberations focused on work on an international agreement for the time after expiry of the first commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol at the end of 2012. The high-level participants could, however, not agree on a new international climate protection agreement nor on a clear timetable for the drafting of such an agreement. In informal discussions, a group of states prepared the Copenhagen Accord, which contains at least a commitment to holding the average increase in global temperature below a maximum two degrees Celsius, financial pledges and the commitment to set up a Copenhagen Green Climate Fund. The Conference’s plenary “took note of” the Accord, the mandates of the two sub-groups under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol were extended and confirmed respectively. The two sub-groups are to continue their work in 2010 and contribute the outcome of their negotiations to the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

In the field of biodiversity, discussions were dominated by preparations for the International Year of Biodiversity 2010, when analysis will be undertaken to determine whether it has been possible to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss, and what efforts and goals will be needed to preserve biodiversity for future generations and to ensure its sustainable use. By establishing an international regime on Access to Genetic Resources and Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising out of their Utilization (ABS, access and benefit-sharing regime), the international community aims to strike a balance between utilising resources to meet the needs of humanity and creating an incentive for resource preservation. Negotiations on the new regime are ongoing and its adoption is scheduled for October 2010 at the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity. Work also focused on enabling the adoption in 2010 of the final element of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, namely an international liability and redress system for damage resulting from transboundary movements of genetically modified organisms.

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has increasingly focused on the problem of soil and land degradation leading to the inability of populations in disadvantaged areas to sustain possible self-sufficiency. Discussions at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties, held in Buenos Aires from 21 September to 2 October, focused on the implementation of the Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the UNCCD (2008–2018). Agreement was reached on establishing globally and/or regionally binding impact and efficiency indicators for measuring progress made in implementing the Strategy. The Austrian coordinator for the Convention was elected representative of Western Europe.
at the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (COP Bureau) for a period of two years.

In the chemicals field, a number of decisions were taken and initiatives launched at international level which will contribute to making positive use of chemicals and minimising their negative effects on human health and the environment. At the 25th session of the UNEP Governing Council, which convened in Nairobi from 16 to 20 February, the international community decided to prepare a mercury treaty. This agreement is to cover all areas where mercury is used and/or emitted and will subsequently also include other hazardous heavy metals. An international working group had already drafted elements of the future agreement’s text and the first round of treaty negotiations is scheduled to be held in Stockholm in June 2010. The second session of the International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM2), which convened from 11 to 15 May, focused on preparing the framework conditions for the implementation and extension of the scope of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. The issues of lead in paint, chemicals in products, nanotechnologies and manufactured nanomaterials and hazardous substances within the lifecycles of electrical and electronic products were identified as emerging priority policy issues – i.e. topics that have not yet been given sufficient attention or have not yet been properly addressed, but could, nevertheless, have significant adverse effects on humans and/or the environment. The conference stressed the need to improve the availability of information on hazardous chemicals in consumer goods, such as computers, textiles and toys. At the Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, which met in Geneva from 4 to 8 May, a further nine persistent pollutants were included in the technical appendices (communication by the depositary of 26 August). The conference also prepared a plan to reduce the use of the dangerous chemical DDT. In order to promote synergies with other multilateral conventions in the field of chemicals and waste management, a synergy package was adopted that is to pave the way for enhanced cooperation and coordination with the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade.

The 21st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer was held in Port Ghalib (Egypt) from 4 to 8 November. After the States Parties had committed themselves at their 19th Meeting to accelerating the phase-out of hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) and to bringing forward the phase-out date by ten years for developing countries, discussions focused on launching measures to restrict hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). These substances, which do not deplete the ozone layer but are harmful to the climate, are increasingly used as a replacement for HCFCs, particularly in developing countries. Although this topic was subject to intensive
deliberations, no agreement was reached and the subject will therefore be a key item on the agenda of future meetings. Decisions were, however, adopted on defining quantitative restrictions for the use of methyl bromide which were also expanded to include quarantine applications.

The International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture establishes a multilateral access and benefit-sharing (ABS) system for the specialised area of plant production thus establishing a link between agriculture and the environment. Access to these resources for plant breeding and scientific purposes is free worldwide and based on a standard agreement. At its session held in Tunis from 1 to 5 June the Governing Body of the Treaty adopted an alternative dispute settlement procedure that completed the standard agreement. The Governing Body also decided to fund the multilateral Benefit-sharing Fund of the Funding Strategy with 116 million US dollars over a five year period. Farmers already benefit from this Fund worldwide as it promotes the preservation of domestic crops adapted to the local climatic conditions thus reducing reliance on imports. Austria was elected to chair the next session of the Governing Body of the Treaty that will convene in Bali in March 2011.

The 5th World Water Forum took place in Istanbul from 16 to 22 March and was dedicated to “Bridging Divides for Water“. The topics addressed at the Forum dealt with

- Global Change and Risk Management (including the climate component)
- Advancing Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals
- Managing and Protecting Water Resources
- Governance and Management
- Finance
- Education, Knowledge and Capacity Development.

The Forum, which meets every three years, focused on developing and discussing sustainable solutions to water issues thus influencing the world wide water agenda over the coming years (within the G8, UN-CSD, UNFCCC, for instance). The main outcomes are a Ministerial Declaration (government level), the Istanbul Water Consensus (local level) and the Istanbul Water Guide (expert level).

The 61st Annual Meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was held in Madeira from 16 to 26 June. After the organisation’s ability to act had been restricted by its two rivalling camps for several years, member countries continued working towards a consensual solution. It was, however, not possible to reach any decisions on controversial issues at this meeting.
K. International Cultural Policy

I. Goals and Priorities

The promotion of Austrian international cultural policy activities is one of the core tasks of Austrian foreign policy. With some 5,000 projects per year, international cultural policy contributes substantially to shaping Austria’s image abroad, supports artists and scientists involved in international projects and promotes inter-cultural dialogue. Austria is internationally regarded as a “cultural nation”, which enables it to enjoy a global presence and set specific priorities both with respect to contemporary arts as well as its manifold cultural traditions. When putting international cultural activities into practice, Austria can draw on a comprehensive network of 30 Cultural Fora, 55 Austria Libraries (Österreich Bibliotheken), nine Austria Institutes (Österreich Institute), special cooperation offices in Lviv, Sarajevo and Washington D.C. as well as the cultural programme and project work of the Austrian embassies and consulates general.

This year’s activities were dedicated to the thematic priority of remembering the new start for Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain twenty years ago. With the launch of numerous projects under the “EUROPA 1989 | 2009 Geteilt | Geeint: Aufbruch in ein neues Europa” (Europe 1989 | 2009 Divided | Reunited: Start into a New Europe) (www.1989-2009.at) initiative, Austria succeeded in achieving an understanding, particularly among young people, both in Austria and abroad of the important role played by the peaceful revolutions of 1989 in shaping the future of Europe.

Special highlights in this year’s cultural calendar were musical events to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Joseph Haydn’s death, the official “Austria-Japan Year” featuring numerous projects linking tradition and innovation of both cultures, and the continuous further extension of the “Culture Matters” programmes focusing on South Eastern Europe. The Permanent Conference of Historians, bringing together Czech and Austrian scientists, was set up by both countries’ foreign ministries and makes an important contribution to promoting good neighbourly relations.

1. Selected International Cultural Policy Projects

1.1. Music

During the Joseph Haydn commemorative year 2009, Austria once again had plenty of opportunities to present itself internationally as a country rich in both musical tradition and cutting-edge innovation. Of the numerous events supported by the Austrian representations abroad, the extended concert tour of Haydn Trio Eisenstadt is of particular note. The concerts given by the Trio included works by eighteen renowned contemporary composers from Austria and abroad, who were commissioned under the “Dedicated to Haydn/
D2H” project, launched by the Haydn Festspiele Eisenstadt, to write piano trios inspired by Haydn. The commissioned pieces included the “Haydn go seek” trio by the American composer William Bolcom and a piano trio by the Japanese composer Yui Kakinuma.

In 2009, the reference book “Frauen/Musik Österreich” (Women/Music Austria) was published for the first time in German and English. The information provided in this comprehensive directory of female musical artists in Austria ranges from Olga Neuwirth to Soap&Skin and aims to raise awareness of the women active in Austria’s music scene and make them more widely known internationally. Among the artists who contributed to this book was the composer Gabriele Proy, the world premiere of whose soundscape composition “Kimochi” was performed – with the support of the FMEIA – in Tokyo to celebrate the Austria-Japan Year 2009.

In line with the commitment to offer particular support to young contemporary musical artists and talented young people, the action programme “The New Austrian Sound of Music” was re-launched for the period 2009/10.

“Exile music” remained high on the agenda of Austrian international cultural policy. The “Forum Voix Etouffées” concert series in Paris and the “Festival Musiques Interdites” in Marseille, for instance, were again granted support towards performing works by Arnold Schönberg, Viktor Ullmann, Erich Wolfgang Korngold and other exiled or ostracised Austrian musical artists.

1.2. Literature, Dance and Theatre

In 2009, literature and theatre events again focused on presenting contemporary works and productions.

An ever-growing number of Cultural Fora and embassies organise events under the “Österreich liest” (Austria reads) initiative. This initiative offers an excellent platform for young Austrian authors to present their works abroad. In the field of literature, readings by the authors make up the major part of the relevant activities. An – albeit small – selection of the authors who participated in this initiative and whose works, some of which in translation, were presented at these readings included Lilian Faschinger, Clemens Setz, Andrea Grill, Alexander Peer, Barbara Frischmuth, Thomas Stangl, Daniel Glattauer, Dimitre Dinev, Erich Hackl, Eva Menasse, Ewald Palmetshofer, Gerhild Steinbuch, Josef Haslinger, Josef Winkler, Karl Markus Gauß, Markus Köhle, Raoul Schrott, Reinhard Kaiser-Mühlecker, Robert Menasse, Sabine Gruber, Thomas Glavinic and Walter Kappacher. As part of their activities at the cultural level, the Austrian Cultural Fora and embassies also support publications and literary criticism projects.

Activities in the field of theatre included foreign productions of works by Austrian authors, such as “Die Präsidentinnen” by Werner Schwab, “Was geschah nachdem Nora ihren Mann verlassen hatte, oder Stützen der Ges-
Austrian dance has come to play an important role in the international dance scene. As part of the events organised in celebration of the Austria-Japan Year marking the 140th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the szene salzburg organised a programme on contemporary dance in Japan, featuring the artists Chris Haring/Liquid Loft, David Subal and Michikazu Matsune, Anne Juren & Kroot Jurak, Milli Bitterli and Akemi Takeya with productions which had either been developed or performed at the szene salzburg. The Editta Braun Company, Superamas, Cie Willi Dorner, pilottanz und Silke Grabinger, Kerstin Kussmaul, and Philipp Gehrmaier, were invited to perform at international festivals including the Noche en Blanco in Lima, the European Dance Festival Cyprus, the International Theatre Festival El Kef/Tunesia, the Shanghai Dance Festival and the Kinani Dance Festival Maputo.
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and to give solo performances internationally. Their performances were frequently combined with workshops enabling students and other interested people to gain insights into the individual artist’s dance style.

1.3. Fine and Visual Arts

Besides numerous solo and group exhibitions and the presentation of Austrian artists at international festivals, activities of particular note in the field of fine and visual arts included the cooperation with “Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture” and the wide-ranging series of events organised at the Cultural Fora and Austrian representations abroad in connection with the priority themes of 2009 – the “Europa 1989 | 2009 Geteilt | Geeint: Aufbruch in ein neues Europa“ (Europe 1989 | 2009 Divided | Reunited: Start into a New Europe) initiative and the celebrations marking the Joseph Haydn commemorative year.

Exhibitions that were specifically designed for the Europe 1989 | 2009 initiative and presented at a large number of Cultural Fora and embassies included “Eiserner Vorhang – Reisen im Niemandsland” (Iron Curtain – A Voyage in No Man’s Land) by Kurt Kaindl, “Aus Nachbarn werden Freunde – Jugendkontakte in Mitteleuropa nach 1989” (Neighbours become Friends – contacts among young people in Central Europe after 1989) curated by the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe (Institut für den Donauraum und Mitteleuropa, IDM) and the Intercultural Centre in Vienna, “Witz und (R) Evolution-1989-Davor/Danach” (wit and (r)evolution-1989-before/after), a common project supported by all Central European embassies and Cultural Institutes in Vienna, and “Europe – Work in Progress” by Barbara Zeidler from the Vienna-based Institute for Culture-Resistant Goods.

The mobile documentary exhibition “Joseph Haydn – Ein musikalisches Universalgenie” (Joseph Haydn – A Universal Musical Genius), that focused on Joseph Haydn’s life and creative work as well as major historical events during the artist’s lifetime, and the photo exhibition “Haydn im Fokus“ (focus on Haydn) by Manfred Horvath, that dealt with places and topics in Haydn’s biography in an opulent culinary manner were designed as travelling exhibitions and presented together with specifically designed fringe events at more than 40 Austrian representations and Cultural Fora in about 70 locations worldwide. These exhibitions were a common project launched jointly by the Haydn Festspiele Eisenstadt (Eisenstadt Haydn Festival), the Internationale Joseph Haydn Privatstiftung Eisenstadt (Joseph Haydn Private Foundation Eisenstadt) and the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

The democratisation process of 1989 led to the foundation of KulturKontakt Austria (KKA) as “Ostfonds” (fund for Eastern Europe) to promote initiatives in the fields of education and culture in Eastern and South Eastern Europe. In 2009, the founding of KKA was celebrated in the exhibition series “Gren-
zenlos“ (without borders), marking the twentieth anniversary of the opening of Eastern Europe and the foundation of KulturKontakt Austria with those artists who had been supported by KKA under an Artist-in-Residence programme between 1992 and 2007. The exhibition series was a joint project by KKA and the FMEIA. Following seven exhibitions which had been supported by the Cultural Fora in Croatia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia, the exhibition shown in Austria marked the successful completion of the cycle.

In cooperation with “Linz 2009 European Capital of Culture”, the travelling exhibition “Inge Morath.Donau”, a photo documentation on the diversity to be found along the river Danube both in the landscape and in the civilisations it separates and unites, was shown at Ursulinenhof, the Province of Upper Austria’s cultural arts centre in Linz.

2009 also saw the kick-off of the “freiraum quartier21 INTERNATIONAL” project, which is a new concept for cooperation between the FMEIA and the MuseumsQuartier Wien in the exhibition sector. This novel series of events focuses on presenting more exhibitions and projects dealing with fashion, design and digital culture. By sharing their relevant experience and international contacts, the Austrian Cultural Fora contribute substantially to the success of the project.

The opening of the design exhibition “Real World Laboratory – Central European Design”, a project by Platform Culture – Central Europe, which had been designed and produced for the 2008 International Design Biennial St. Etienne, marked the launch of the new programme. Designs from Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Austria were on display, each country showing exhibits from a different object area characteristic for the respective region.

Cultural Fora, embassies and consulates made extensive use of the successful concept of travelling exhibitions. Demand was particularly high for “Die unbekannten Europäer” (the unknown Europeans), which was designed in 2008 showing photographs by Kurt Kaindl and authored by Karl-Markus Gauß, as well as the exhibitions on Austrian architecture and design (including Viennese Architecture around 1900 (shown in Iran), Otto Wagner and his Students, Josef Hoffmann and the Wiener Werkstätte (shown in the Czech Republic), GD2D+PD3D-Fresh Air by Pure Austrian Design (shown in Denmark). The “Die unbekannten Europäer” (the unknown Europeans) travelling exhibition was shown in Latvia (in Saldus and Riga), Sweden and Macedonia.

1.4. Film

The international reputation enjoyed by the Austrian film industry has grown over the last few years, not least due to the success of Michael Haneke and the Oscar won by Stefan Ruzowitzky. Austrian films meanwhile feature regularly at international film festivals.
The film weeks and regular film nights featuring Austrian films organised by the Austrian Cultural Fora and embassies in Central Asian cities, in Budapest, New York, Tel Aviv, Cairo, Warsaw and Prague, to name but a few, again attracted large audiences. The latest Austrian films were presented at the EU Film Days and at film festivals in Amman, Brasilia, Hanoi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Managua, Manila, New Delhi, Nairobi and Mombasa, Singapore, Tokyo and Chile, Canada, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for instance. In Teheran, the showing of “Revanche” by Götz Spielmann was much acclaimed by the audience.

Furthermore, Austrian film productions were shown at more than 50 international film festivals including the Cinema Europa Filmfestival in Mexico City, the East End Film Festival: All Eyes East London, the 17th Annual Environmental Film Festival in Washington, the International Philosophy Film Festival in Krakow and the Dresdner Schmalfilmstage – Festival der kleinen Filmformate (Dresden festival of small film formats), which also goes to show the growing importance of documentary, feature, animated cartoon and experimental films.

1.5. Academic and Scientific Events

Twenty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, students, scientists, politicians, contemporary witnesses, and other interested individuals discussed in symposia, seminars and conferences the events of the time, the development Europe has taken since then as well as the hopes and wishes that went hand in hand with the unification of Europe. The significance of the year 1989 is also reflected in the fact that events were organised far beyond Europe’s borders, thus underlining that recognition of the importance of these historic events was not limited to our continent.

Symposia marking the 70th anniversary of the death of Joseph Roth and dealing with the various aspects of the author and columnist’s life and work were organised in Paris, Berlin and Ljubljana and attracted much interest.

In 2009, Austrian scientists and artists again participated in conferences, presentations, workshops and seminars dealing with almost every aspect of science and art. Some 500 events were held dealing with issues ranging from political science, humanities and arts, didactic approaches, theories of natural science to deliberations on arts history as well as historical and legal issues. Performances were frequently coupled with workshops where artists shared their knowledge and experience with students and other attendees.

2. Austrian International Cultural Policy Initiatives

To mark the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain, the FMEIA organised a wide-ranging series of events dedicated to “EUROPA 1989 | 2009 Geteilt | Geeint: Aufbruch in ein neues Europa“ (Europe 1989 | 2009 Divided | Reunited: Start into a New Europe). The events aimed at sharing, particularly with
goals and priorities

young people, the significance of the major changes of 1989, the effect they have on international policy to this day and the resulting perspectives for the future. The highlight was the Europe Congress held at the Vienna Hofburg on 28 and 29 May which dealt with politics, culture, business and youth in panel and floor discussions. Furthermore, exhibitions, discussion events and interviews with contemporary witnesses were organised under this initiative, which also included numerous publications. The relevant activities were launched in cooperation with Austrian ministries, scientific institutions and artists active in this field. A ceremonial act, organised jointly by the Permanent Missions of Austria, Germany and Greece to the OSCE at the Vienna Hofburg on 6 November and dedicated to “20 Jahre Fall des Eisernen Vorhangs und der Berliner Mauer – eine Betrachtung aus der Perspektive der Organisation für Sicherheit und Zusammenarbeit in Europa, OSZE” (20 years since the fall of the Iron Curtain and the Berlin Wall – reflections from the perspective of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, OSCE) marked the final event.

2009 also saw the 140th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation by Austria and Japan and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The celebratory events that were organised throughout the year in both Japan and Austria put the close and traditionally good ties of friendship between the two countries in the spotlight of public attention and painted a comprehensive and colourful picture of the diverse nature of mutual relations (see: http://www.austria-japan2009.org/). The foreign ministries in Tokyo and Vienna were primarily responsible for the “Austria-Japan Year 2009“. The Austrian Embassy in Tokyo and the Japanese Embassy in Vienna were in charge of organising and implementing the projects in the two countries.

Under the CULTURE MATTERS initiative, launched as part of its focus on the Balkans, the FMEIA had in 2008 joined forces with KulturKontakt Austria, the Pro Helvetia foundation, the German Foreign Office, the Goethe-Institut and the S. Fischer-Stiftung to jointly realise a large-scale international translation programme. The goal is to support the comprehensive integration of Southeastern Europe into European structures and discourse by overcoming language barriers between literature written in German and in the Southeastern European languages. By the end of 2009, some 160 works written by German-speaking authors had been translated into Southeastern European languages and some 40 works by Southeastern European authors into German. Furthermore, translations from one Southeastern European language into another are promoted and professional development scholarships granted to young translators.

3. Grants for Cultural Projects

In order to support innovative projects with cultural policy content and raise awareness of foreign policy and Austrian international cultural policy
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objectives amongst the general public, the FMEIA provides funding in the form of grants to highly diverse cultural projects. In 2009, budget funding of 265,000 euros was made available to 56 projects from the field of art, culture and science. The following selection of projects offers just a brief overview of the wide range of grants made available: the exhibition “Lichtflecke – Frau sein im Holocaust” (Spots of Light: to be a Woman in the Holocaust) in the Nestroyhof in Vienna received funding, as did the innovative “Museum ohne Grenzen” (museum without borders) showing an exhibition on Christian art under the heading of Discover Baroque Art, and the Österreichi Kulturhof in Neuhofen an der Ybbs with its special exhibition “Südböhmen” (South Bohemia). In the meetings and conferences sector, funding was granted to the youth conference of the international Pan European Movement, the international conference of the Lion Feuchtwanger society dealing with “Exil – Glaube und Kultur” (exile – faith and culture), the Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe as well as the European Forum Alpbach. Among the theatre projects and numerous festivals that received funding, special attention should be drawn to the “Die Besten aus dem Osten: Folge 4: Kroatien” (the best from the East, episode 4 Croatia) production by the Vienna Volkstheater, the “Jiddische Kulturtage“ (Yiddish Culture Days) held by the Jewish Institute for Adult Education and the Asian-European music camp organised during the Wiener Festwochen (Vienna Festival).

This year, the FMEIA again placed particular focus on supporting cinematic art by funding the EU XXL Filmfestival in Krems, the Crossing Europe Filmfestival in Linz and the “KinoDynamique” international short film festival organised by kino5. In the field of music, the Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, the Klangforum Wien and the Vienna Art Orchestra received funds for their foreign tours. Underlining the important role played by music as a key element of Austrian understanding of culture, financial assistance was also granted to innovative music projects such as the international Soundscape Lightening symposium by composer Gabriele Proy. Austrian cultural institutions whose activities also reach beyond national borders like the Kulturverein österreichischer Roma (cultural society of Austrian Roma) or the Pro Oriente foundation received funding for their initiatives.

Students’ teams from the University of Vienna and the University of Graz were also granted financial support to enable their participation in global international law competitions. The subsidy granted to the Gesellschaft Österreich-Mexico (Austro-Mexican society) for the scientific analysis of Emperor Maximilian’s archives is particularly noteworthy. The Slovenian cultural associations Brücken and Abstaller Feld received project-related funding aimed at offering active support to the German-speaking ethnic group. Austro-Italian cultural institutions also received financial assistance, as did the St. George’s College Austrian School in Istanbul for its annual publication.
II. Bilateral Agreements in the Fields of Culture and Science

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of Montenegro on Scientific and Technical Cooperation was signed in Podgorica on 10 June. The Protocol Amending the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Republic of Slovenia on Scientific and Technical Cooperation was signed on 30 June.

The Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Austria and the Government of the Czech Republic on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture, Education, Science, Youth and Sports came into force on 1 July. Based on this Agreement, an extraordinary meeting of the Mixed Commission was held in Budejovice on 3 December at which it was decided to extend the programme set up by the two countries on cooperation in the fields of science and education “Aktion Republik Österreich – Tschechische Republik – Wissenschafts- und Erziehungskooperation” (action Austria – Czech Republic – scientific and educational cooperation) until 31 December 2015.

Based on existing cultural agreements, Mixed Commissions held the following meetings in 2009: fifth meeting with Tunisia in Vienna on 16 and 17 February, seventh meeting with Egypt in Cairo on 14 May (the last such meeting with Egypt having taken place in 1991), the meeting with Belgium convened in Vienna on 19 and 20 November and the meeting with Croatia, also held in Vienna, took place on 16 and 17 December.

The first-ever Scientific and Technical Commission meetings were held with India and Macedonia, the basic agreements having come into force in 2008. The Mixed Austro-Macedonian Commission met in Skopje on 9 November and the Mixed Austro-Indian Commission convened in Vienna on 15 December.

On 16 June, delegations of Austrian and Swiss officials met in Vienna to discuss cultural matters. Consultations at delegation level were held with the Goethe-Institut in Vienna on 14 October.

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 scientific fields as well as the general public. They are an indispensable element of Austria’s international cultural policy. Due to their partnership with
local universities, Austria Libraries have also contributed to establishing a scientific network abroad.

The network of Austria Libraries abroad currently comprises 55 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 a year use the Libraries, whose stocks have grown to around 300,000 books, 4,500 audio items, 1,000 CD-ROMs and 3,000 videos. Accessible via the Austria Libraries web portal (www.oesterreich-bibliotheken.at), the database on Austrian literature already includes more than 12,000 foreign-language translations of Austrian works (Auslandsaustriaca).

Another step towards further intensifying cultural relations with Ukraine was taken in May when an Austria Library was opened in Drohobytch. Following comprehensive renovation and refurbishing works, the Austria Library at the University of Pristina/Kosovo was re-opened on 25 September. The anniversaries of their establishment in Moscow and Jerusalem were both used as opportunities to refurbish and upgrade these Libraries’ premises. The Austria Library in Moscow was generously equipped with furniture and technical equipment by its host institution. Preparations were initiated to enable the opening of a further Austria Library in Iasi/Romania and the setting-up of new Austria Libraries in Bishkek/Kyrgyzstan and Baku/Azerbaijan.

Under the annual support and professional development scheme for Austria Library employees, the 25th Klosterneuburg Seminar was organised in cooperation with the Niederösterreichische Landesakademie. Under the heading of “Der Eiserne Vorhang und sein Fall in der Literatur” (the Iron Curtain and its fall in literature) the key lectures given at this seminar focused on the impact the fall of the Iron Curtain had on literature. Hosted by the Cultural Policy Department at the FMEIA and the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the third biennial conference of heads and scientific advisors at Austria Libraries abroad convened in November. At this meeting, the conference volume “Reise in die Nachbarschaft. Zur Wirkungsgeschichte der Literatur aus der Bukowina und Galizien nach 1918” commemorating Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and written by Manfred Müller and Larissa Cybenko as well as the research volume “Zwischenräume. Kulturelle Transfers in deutschsprachi- gen Regionalperiodika des Habsburgerreichs (1850–1918)” by Matjaž Birk/Austria Library Maribor were presented. Both volumes were published by the LIT-Verlag publishing house in its new series on »Transkulturelle Forschungen an den Österreich-Bibliotheken im Ausland« (trans-cultural research at Austria Libraries abroad). A high-level body of Austrian editors supervises this new series of scientific publications by Austria Libraries.

Based on a cooperation with the government of the province of Upper Austria, the heads and scientific advisors at Austria Libraries abroad were offered the opportunity to embark together with Upper Austrian authors on
In 2009, the Austria Libraries again participated in the “Österreich liest. Treffpunkt Bibliothek” (Austria Reads. Meeting Point Library) campaign, which attracted more than half a million visitors to events held in Austria and abroad.

Maintaining a particular focus on Austrian humanities, books were donated to Austria Libraries abroad as well as social science and German language studies institutes at universities around the globe, inter alia in Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Japan, Morocco, Poland, Senegal, Turkey and the UK.

IV. Science, Education and Language

1. Science and Education

1.1. Austrian Professorships and Centres for Austrian Studies Abroad

Established at universities mainly in Europe, the USA and Israel, these facilities aim to initiate, deepen and coordinate the study of Austria- and Europe-specific topics in the respective host country’s academic life and to stimulate academic research in the respective subject area as well as encourage publication of the relevant findings. Regular collaboration with embassies, consulates general and Cultural Fora contributes substantially towards enabling chairs and centres for Austrian studies to fulfil their tasks. Through networking with the relevant local and Austrian institutions, the Austrian chairs also strengthen Austria’s involvement in the international scientific, academic and cultural network.

1.2. Grants and Mobility Programmes for University Studies

Following the entry into force of the relevant federal law, all responsibilities of the former Austrian Exchange Service (Österreichischer Austauschdienst, OeAD) were transferred to the newly established OeAD-GmbH taking effect on 1 January. The OeAD-GmbH thus provides services to grant holders and administers the various mobility programmes such as, for instance, Erasmus, bilateral grant programmes, Austrian Development Cooperation programmes and scientific and technical cooperation programmes. In implementing these tasks the OeAD-GmbH acts as partner of the FMEIA, which is in turn responsible for the relevant coordination and information sharing activities involving Austrian representations abroad and foreign representation in Austria.
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 German courses on an independent basis. These courses, which are an important element of Austria’s international cultural policy, had up to that time been offered at cultural institutes. Based in Vienna, the organisation maintains institutes in Belgrade, Bratislava, Brno, Budapest, Krakow, Ljubljana, Rome, Warsaw and Wroclaw. All of the Österreich Institut facilities see themselves as centres for the promotion of the study and cultivation of the German language as it is written and spoken in Austria. The Austrian German Language Diploma (Österreichisches Sprachdiplom Deutsch, OSD) 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.

Since 2009, lecturers and language assistants have been recruited and assigned to their posts by the OeAD-GmbH, which took over the relevant responsibilities from the “Österreich-Kooperation”. The chair of the Department of German as a Foreign Language at the University of Vienna selects and advises German as a Foreign Language (GFL) trainee teachers, while the OeAD is responsible for the programme’s administration. There are currently lectureships in some 130 locations, language assistant posts in ten countries and GFL teaching placements in some 45 countries. Cultural events are frequently organised in cooperation with Austrian representations abroad.

V. Multilateral Scientific and Technical Cooperation

Austria is constantly intensifying 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 Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva, the European Space Agency (ESA) in Paris and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT) in Darmstadt. Austria is represented in these organisations by the FMEIA, the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research. In addition, Austria’s foreign policy interests are also represented through its involvement in the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC) in Heidelberg, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in Laxenburg, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) in Reading (United Kingdom) as well as the European Space Pol-
icy Institute (ESPI) in Vienna. Efforts aimed at fostering the networking of activities launched by international scientific institutions headquartered in Austria play a particularly important role in this context.

The 36 member countries of COST are engaged in scientific and technical cooperation in the field of pre-competitive research, with a special focus being placed on initiatives in the multi- and interdisciplinary field of chemistry (nano-sciences and interdisciplinary research). In the COST context, Austria attaches particular importance to promoting third-country participation. Funding is also provided for a dedicated COST Fund, established to enable the participation of scientists and researchers from the Western Balkan countries. Austria has been a member of COST since 1971.

Austria also collaborates with the European Space Agency (ESA), whose Convention enables selective participation in ESA programmes with a guaranteed return on investment. Participation in these ESA programmes provides an excellent launching pad for industrial production geared towards commercial applications. Through ESA, Austria is thus involved 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.

VI. International Cultural Policy at the European Union Level

In keeping with the European Year of Creativity and Innovation, this year’s cultural policy focus was placed on the interrelation between culture and creativity and the momentum thus generated for society, business, employment and regional development as well as the positive effect created by the targeted promotion of creative and innovative skills amongst children and young people. In this context, the EU Council also adopted two relevant conclusions.

The digitalisation of cultural content remained high on the agenda, with the focus being placed on funding, managing and expanding the “Europeana” web portal and dealing with the respective copyright issues. Closely related to this was the EU’s position and the representation of European interests in connection with the “Google Books” dispute settlement proceedings in the USA.

At the suggestion of the European Commission, the year 2011 was designated “European Year of Voluntary Activities Promoting Active Citizenship”. The goals to be achieved focus on raising awareness of the value and importance of volunteering, the appropriate reward and recognition of volunteering activities and creating an enabling and facilitating environment for volunteering in the EU. To this end the EU will make available funds of three million euros for preparatory activities in 2010 and eight million euros for
activities to be launched in 2011. In Austria, the Federal Ministry for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection holds responsibility for implementing these activities.

Guimarães and Maribor were designated European Capitals of Culture 2012 and Košice and Marseille for the year 2013. By drawing of lots, Luxembourg and Romania were entitled to appoint experts to the European Capital of Culture jury for the period from 2010 to 2012. The two nominees, Erna Hennicot-Schoepges and Constantin Chiriac, were subsequently appointed to this function by the Council.

The Europe for Citizens programme supports a large band-width of activities and organisations dedicated to promoting active European citizenship. The programme was set up to bridge the divide between citizens and the European Union and to promote the participation of citizens and groups representing citizens’ interests in building up the “European project”. With a view to promoting their feeling of belonging to a common European system of values and the process of European unity, citizens will be offered the opportunity to collect transnational experiences.

Funding made available for the Europe for Citizens programme totals 215 million euros for 2007–2013. Under the programme there is a wide range of opportunities for funding projects launched by European citizens, civil society organisations, communities and cities, think-tanks and research facilities. In 2009, nineteen Austrian projects received total funding of some 575,000 euros: seven projects in the field of town twinning, ten initiatives launched by civil society organisations, research institutions and think-tanks, as well as two projects relating to “Active European Remembrance”.

The EU CULTURE programme (2007–2013) was set up to promote networking among organisers of cultural events across Europe. Private and public organisations like cultural societies, theatres, festivals, publishing houses, museums, professional associations, research centres, universities, cultural forums and authorities are entitled to participate in this programme which offers support in the form of grants to cooperation projects in all spheres of culture, literary translation projects as well as operational expenses of organisations that are active across Europe. The programme aims to promote cross-border mobility of artists and propagation of cultural and artistic works as well as inter-cultural dialogue.

Set up for a period of seven years, the EU CULTURE programme is funded with 400 million euros. Under the scheme, eleven Austrian projects received total funding of some 3.5 million euros in 2009. Nineteen Austrian institutions have contributed to cultural projects launched by other countries participating in the programme. A further six Austrian cultural institutions received funding to cover their operational expenses in the categories “festivals” and “networks” amounting to 462,450 euros in total.
Chaired respectively by the Czech and Swedish EU Council presidencies, the EU Education, Youth and Culture Council met on 12 May and 27 November in Brussels. Federal Minister Claudia Schmied participated in both sessions. The EU Ministers of Culture did not convene for an informal meeting. The Committee on Culture met thirteen times in Brussels and held one meeting at the invitation of the Czech Council Presidency in Prague.

VII. Intercultural and Interfaith Dialogue

1. Austria’s Contribution to Strengthening the Dialogue

Internal European and global developments of the past few years have underlined the necessity for dialogue among and with the major world religions, as already initiated by Austria three decades ago. At the same time, it has become evident that dialogue strategies have to go far beyond promoting inter-faith dialogue; indeed they must encompass issues spanning the spectrum from migration to integration as well as the central political challenges of democracy, the rule of law, respect of fundamental and human rights and promotion of societal and cultural diversity. This makes dialogue an important tool for diversity management and sustainable prevention and resolution of conflicts. Austria is thus interested in establishing a comprehensive dialogue among and with cultures and religions, particularly in connection with issues relating to the development of Islam within the framework of European values and the European model of life. In dialogues with mainly Muslim societies, particularly in Asia, the Arab world and Turkey, special attention is paid to the role and empowerment of women, their participation in societal and political life as well as the inclusion of young people.

In this context, a symposium on “State, Law and Religion in Pluralistic Societies – Austrian and Indonesian Perspectives”, organised jointly by the FMEIA and the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, was held from 27 to 29 May. The symposium, which had been prepared in collaboration with the School of Law at the University of Vienna, reflected both countries’ interest in an exchange of experiences on the societal, political and legal bases of religious diversity and on strategies for dealing successfully with this diversity. The meeting, which brought together committed and high-level religious representatives and experts in various disciplines, was based on the bilateral exchange programme directed at diplomats actively engaged in the field of “dialogue among cultures and religions”, which was launched in 2008 and aims to strengthen relations between the two countries on a variety of levels ranging from public administration to universities and research, civil society and religious communities. This exchange programme for diplomats involved in dialogue has become a model programme and has already been adopted by several other states.

As part of the FMEIA’s efforts aimed at actively promoting the participation and inclusion of Muslim youth in society and politics in Austria and Europe,
the symposium on “Identity and Participation: Cross Cultural and Muslim Youth in Europe” was held in cooperation with the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations (UNAOC) on 29 and 30 June in Vienna. The event, which was held at the Vienna Diplomatic Academy, attracted a large audience and was opened by Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger and the High Representative for the Alliance of Civilisations, Jorge Sampaio. Europe’s preoccupation with developing a common European identity was discussed against the background of integration challenges faced by people with a migration background and European society with respect to education, labour market, civil society, public institutions and the political system. The two-day symposium brought together more than 100 high-level representatives from politics, science and religious communities from Austria, the EU, Turkey and the USA.

The project “Women in Dialogue: Empowerment and Consolidation”, which is co-funded by the FMEIA, was launched in Lebanon in October. The first seminar involving 50 male and female participants from ten countries of the Near and Middle East, the Gulf region and North Africa was held in Beirut from 2 to 5 October. The public closing event was attended by Lebanese Interior Minister Ziad Baroud and Ursula Plassnik, former Federal Minister, Member of the Austrian Parliament and Special Representative for International Women’s Affairs at the FMEIA. The project aims to empower the women of the region in dialogue processes at all levels (local, governmental, regional and international) and to train and educate them as multipliers.

2. Anna Lindh Foundation

The Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures (ALF), whose Secretariat is based in Alexandria/Egypt, acts as a “network of networks” among the 43 Member States of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, adding cultural and civil society components to the Union’s political goals for the Mediterranean region (see A.VI.7.3). Under the Dialogue among Cultures, the Austrian ALF network is coordinated by the FMEIA and currently comprises 43 members from various areas of Austrian civil society.

Together with the ALF Secretariat in Alexandria, the Austrian ALF network coordinator organised a training seminar in Vienna held from 2 to 5 April that focused on consolidating supra-regional ALF partnerships and practical knowledge sharing for making successful ALF project submissions. The seminar was attended by NGO representatives from 13 countries, including from Israel and Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip). Under a campaign initiated by the ALF and adopted in response to the last Gaza crisis of 2008/2009, a delegation composed of representatives from nine countries travelled to a culture and theatre festival in Israel and Palestine at the end of September, which was organised by the local ALF networks in Israel and Palestine. The event’s highlight was an open-air theatre festival in Gaza.
3. ASEM Interfaith Dialogue

The fifth ASEM Interfaith Dialogue (Asia-Europe Meeting) was held in Seoul from 23 to 25 September. This discussion platform, which convenes once a year alternating between Asia and Europe, is supported by Austria with both financial and personnel resources. As in previous years, Austria also co-sponsored the 2009 dialogue conference. Through the resolutions adopted by the conferences, the ASEM Interfaith Dialogue aims to demonstrate to a wider public in Eastern and South-East Asia as well as in Europe how the world’s faiths and religions are working together in dealing with existential problems facing globalised communities and to prepare concrete proposals for their resolution.

VIII. Holocaust Era Assets Conference

The Holocaust Era Assets Conference (HEAC) held in Prague and Terezin from 26 to 30 June was one of the priorities of the 2009 Czech EU Council Presidency. This conference followed up on the 1997 London Nazi Gold Conference, the 1998 Washington Conference on Holocaust Era Assets as well as the Vilnius Conference on Holocaust Era Looted Cultural Assets (Judaica) and the Stockholm Holocaust Education, Research and Remembrance Conference, both held in 2000. The HEAC dealt with developments that had in the meantime taken place in many areas relating to the coming to terms with the Nazi past and analysed perspectives for the future. The conference’s most substantial outcome was the adoption of the Terezin Declaration by 47 states. It is an extensive, detailed political declaration of intent that covers all important areas relating to coming to terms with the Holocaust and is to be further developed. Furthermore, the HEAC also decided to establish the European Shoah Legacy Institute, a European institution that is to become a centre for the exchange of information on all matters relating to the Holocaust and will be based in Terezin. The first task of the Institute, which will be opened on 1 January 2010, is to support the HEAC Participating States in preparing international guidelines for the restitution of immovable property (restitution principles). As a member of the editing team of the Terezin Declaration, Austria has been assigned a key role in this context.

IX. Austrian Chair of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF)

Set up in 1998 on the initiative of Sweden, the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) is an international institution whose Permanent Secretariat is based in Berlin. It was established with the purpose of becoming an international network
promoting Holocaust education, remembrance and research at national and international levels.

Austria was admitted in 2001 and held the ITF’s Chair in the commemorative year of 2008. The Austrian delegation is headed by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria and the FMEIA. Austrian government representatives as well as experts from the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the National Fund of the Republic of Austria, the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance as well as the organisation “erinnern.at” participate in the permanent working groups. 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 highly regarded within the ITF.

The reform process that had been launched by the Austrian Chair and completed by the subsequent Norwegian Chair, contributed to consolidating and giving greater transparency of the ITF’s funding policy. By establishing a committee on countering anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial and placing an additional focus on Roma inclusion, the ITF was adapted to current developments. Diplomatic efforts aimed at combating revisionism were launched by both the Chair and the ITF’s member states – which have increased to 27 – and have come to play an increasingly important role.
L. Media and Information

I. General

The Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs is constantly striving to keep the public well informed about its activities and the content of its work. In this spirit Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger invited interested citizens to the traditional Open House on the Austrian National Day. The event offered detailed information on the wide range of the Ministry’s activities and an opportunity to meet him personally. A special focus was placed on enabling children and pupils to see how the FMEIA works. In this context cooperation with schools has been intensified. Throughout the year more than 100 school classes were invited to the Ministry and given first-hand information concerning its activities. Moreover, during his “EU Listening and Dialogue Tour” Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger attended meetings and events across Austria where he discussed EU-related issues with citizens, addressing their questions and concerns.

The Ministry’s close collaboration with media representatives from Austria and abroad is reflected in numerous press conferences, background discussions – organised, for instance, to mark Austria’s membership in the UN Security Council, the introduction and adoption of UNSC resolution 1894 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the focus on the Danube and Black Sea regions, and the European External Action Service. It is also manifested in the Ministry’s swift responses to inquiries by journalists concerning international developments as well as in the consular assistance it offers abroad.

II. Internet

The FMEIA makes the widest possible use of communication opportunities offered by the modern media. After every meeting of the General Affairs and External Relations Council, for example, Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger immediately addresses the interested public by summarising the meeting’s results in a brief video message on the Ministry’s homepage at www.aussenministerium.at. The same technology was used to inform viewers about the “EU Listening and Dialogue Tour” which took Federal Minister Michael Spindelegger to the federal provinces including the province capitals St. Pölten, Salzburg and Graz.

The FMEIA’s webpage offers services and useful information for citizens in distress and informs the public about current affairs and other relevant topics. Having modified its websites in 2008 to cater to the requirements of persons with disabilities and offer barrier-free access in line with international standards, the FMEIA continues to further improve barrier-free access
to its website content. The Ministry’s central webpage registered as many as 263,000 hits per month.

III. Publications

To mark Austria’s successful candidacy for a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council for the period 2009/2010 the Ministry published the brochure “Austria and the United Nations”. Other publications included revised and updated editions of “Austria in Brief” and “Advice for Travellers Abroad”.

The Ministry also used the tool of media cooperation to make specific foreign-policy topics accessible to a wider public. These included Austria’s non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, the 30th anniversary of Vienna as the third UN headquarters, a review of the events of the year 1989 and the focus on the Danube and Black Sea regions.

IV. Press Conferences and Events

A central element of the Ministry’s public relations work involved the support of media representatives at press conferences during visits paid by foreign figures, important conferences and other events organised by the FMEIA. Examples include the Europe Congress “Geteilt | Geeint 1989 – 2009: Aufbruch in ein neues Europa” (Divided | Reunited 1989 – 2009: Start into a New Europe), held on 28 and 29 May in the Vienna Hofburg, and the regional conference on the “Danube Region and the Black Sea” organised in Vienna on 6 July in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Federation of Austrian Industries.

V. Press Officers’ Conference

To acknowledge the important role played by public relations and information activities, participants in the Press Officers’ Conference were offered a media training seminar. The meeting also provided press officers at the Austrian embassies with an opportunity to exchange views and share experiences with each other and their colleagues at headquarters.
M. The Austrian Foreign Service

I. Introduction

The international financial and economic crisis that hit Europe in 2009 also impacted budget and headcount at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs. A wide range of measures had to be launched in order to meet savings targets and the requirements set out in the new budget law. Savings were achieved by, for instance, adapting the Austrian network of representations abroad, cutting-down on maintenance and construction activities, and reducing the budget for business travel and international conferences in Austria. The Ministry had to fulfil its core tasks with its level of flexibility reduced even further compared to previous years.

Further headcount reductions also had to be made: in line with the target set out by the Federal Chancellery for the FMEIA’s staffing scheme it will become necessary to reduce staffing levels by a total of 63 FTEs by 2013.

Meanwhile the Administrative Affairs department had to ensure both availability of the logistic framework and optimal use of resources in order to enable the Ministry to successfully accomplish demanding foreign and European policy duties in the year 2009. The Ministry’s activities in this context related inter alia to Austria’s membership of the UN Security Council and the 20th anniversary of the European commemorative year of 1989. To ensure the best-possible support of colleagues in Austria and abroad, further Austrian representations were equipped with state-of-the-art telephone and computer systems, thus contributing to enhanced efficiency and cost reductions. Furthermore, IT security measures were also increased and the topic of IT security will continue to remain a priority over the coming years.

The coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009 laid the foundation for the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS). The EEAS is charged with assisting and supporting the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in fulfilling her tasks. Formation and recruitment for this joint diplomatic service will commence at the beginning of 2010 and the FMEIA will from the start do its utmost to provide all necessary input on the EEAS’ remit, structures and staffing.
The Austrian Foreign Service

II. Working at the Foreign Ministry

Staffing levels at the FMEIA in 2009 by career scheme and gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career Scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Female (in %)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
<td>At home</td>
<td>Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diplomatic staff (A1/v1, A/a)</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consular/administrative staff (A2/v2, B/b)</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical staff (A3/v3, C/c); Qualified support and secretarial staff (A4/A5/v4, D/d, P2/P3/p2/p3, h2/h3)</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Auxiliary service (A7/v5, E/e, p4/p5, h4/h5) IT specialists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>674</strong></td>
<td><strong>633</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,307</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Women accounted for 48.4 per cent of all staff, exceeding the share of women set out in the Federal Equal Treatment Act. In the diplomatic service, which had been lagging behind in this respect, the percentage of female staff reached 32.7 per cent in 2009.

Female Staff in %

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"II. Arbeiten im Außenministerium

Personalstand des BMeiA 2009 nach Verwendung/Geschlechtern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verwendung</th>
<th>Männer</th>
<th>Frauen</th>
<th>insges.</th>
<th>Frauen-anteil in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A1/v1, A/a</strong> Höherer Dienst</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>32.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A2/v2, B/b</strong> Gehobener Dienst</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>252</td>
<td>42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A3/v3, C/c</strong> Fachdienst; <strong>A4/A5/v4, D/d, P2/P3/p2/p3, h2/h3</strong> Qualifizierter mittlerer bzw. mittlerer Dienst</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>596</td>
<td>63.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A7/v5, E/e, p4/p5, h4/h5</strong> Hilfsdienst</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gesamt</strong></td>
<td><strong>674</strong></td>
<td><strong>633</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,307</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.4</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frauen für die gesamten Verwendungen von 48,4% überschritt den im Bundes-Gleichbehandlungsgesetz als Förderungsgebot angeführten Frauenanteil. Im Höheren Dienst, jenem Bereich damit diesbezüglich größten Nachholbedarf, erreichte der Frauenanteil im Jahr 2009 32,7%:

![Graph showing female staff in % from 1999 to 2009](image-url)
After successfully completing the statutory selection process, 54 individuals joined the Foreign Service in 2009 (2007: 55, 2008: 102). Since autumn 2009, seven apprentices (3 male and 4 female) have undergone training as “assistant clerks“.

In the course of 2009, the number of trainees at the FMEIA was reduced by almost half compared to the previous year (each figure as of 31 Dec.):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Career scheme</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 v1/v2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 v1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In recent years, the average retirement age at the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs has always been above the 63-year threshold, thus exceeding the average retirement age of civil servants in Austria (60.49 years in 2009).

### Retirement Age of FMEIA Staff

![Retirement Age Chart](chart.png)

### III. The Foreign Ministry’s Budget at a Glance

The federal budget estimate for the FMEIA for 2009 totalled 435.675 million euros. Of this amount some 72.873 million euros were budgeted for head office expenses, 156.246 million euros for the Austrian representations abroad, 6.787 million euros for cultural projects and activities, 2.141 million euros for international conferences, 98.276 million euros in contributions to international organisations, 98.791 million euros for the Austrian Development Agency GmbH and the Foreign Disaster Relief Fund, and 0.561 million euros for any other expenses.
The Austrian Foreign Service

Budget 2009 in %:

Budget Overview for 1999–2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>FMEIA budget</th>
<th>FMEIA budget as a percentage of the federal budget in %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>297.232</td>
<td>0.53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>305.662</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>303.409</td>
<td>0.52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>299.775</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>307.000</td>
<td>0.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>340.928</td>
<td>0.54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>380.000</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>388.000</td>
<td>0.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>388.109</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>388.087</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>435.675</td>
<td>0.56%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 Fora, missions to intergovernmental organisations and for residential and representative purposes. These premises include historic buildings such as those in London, Paris and Rome as well as modern properties such as the premises 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, cultural 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 also of increasing importance in this context. Furthermore, enhanced cooperation with EU partners such as the Czech Republic and Hungary enables the Ministry to benefit from synergy effects. The facility management group also ensures that activities involving the opening or closing of Austrian representations abroad are implemented as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

With a view to optimising its property management, the FMEIA has started to set up a real estate database (Liegenschaftsdatenbank, LIDA), thus contributing to the administrative reform efforts launched by the Federal Government.

2. Information and Communication Technology

The implementation of substantial information and communication technology projects (ICT projects) was continued throughout 2009. The two most important projects realised by the Ministry in this context are:

- **ELISA**: This acronym stands for the renewal of the ICT infrastructure at properties of the Austrian representations abroad, which was continued throughout the year. The ELISA project involves the replacement of hardware 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 (electronic data collection, categorisation, processing, filing and/or archiving), thus gradually replacing paper files which are currently still in use at representations abroad. By the end of the year, 93 embassies, missions and consular offices had been equipped with ELISA and IMS.

- **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)**: The FMEIA uses data network telephony to connect the Austrian representations to its head office’s telephone system. This award-winning system enables telephone calls between headquarters and representations to be made free of charge worldwide 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, 90% of representations had been equipped with this system.

3. Information Management – Knowledge Management

In autumn, a booklet dealing for the first time with the Ministry’s contemporary history was published under the title “Das Wiedererstehen des österreichischen Auswärtigen Dienstes 1945” (the reestablishment of the Austrian Foreign Service in 1945). The material used consists of files stored at the former State Chancellery and the legacy of some of the pioneering diplomats of the time, which were thoroughly examined and researched before being put together to document the development of the Austrian Foreign Service and the start of operations on “Ballhausplatz” beginning in April 1945.

The processing of the entire holdings of the Foreign Policy Library (Außenpolitische Bibliothek), which currently consists of 50,000 volumes (excluding works belonging to the former Austrian Institute of East and Southeast European Studies) – and their entry into the globally accessible ALEPH library system (named after the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet), were concluded in June. Integration of the holdings of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO’s library into the ALEPH system was also completed. Work relating to processing the library of the Austrian Institute for East and Southeast European Studies (40,000 volumes in total) is still ongoing.

The stock of national and international periodicals and magazines in the Foreign Policy Library continued to be recorded and reviewed for entry into the ALEPH system. While the library’s stock was constantly being expanded by new acquisitions in 2009, articles from papers that are stored exclusively at the Foreign Policy Library also began to be filed electronically in the foreign policy documentation system.

In 2009, the library, which is open to the public on workdays from Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., registered a further increase in both visitors and book requests from Austrian and foreign libraries.

In connection with the administration of subscriptions to national and international dailies as well as weekly and monthly publications, staff at head office and representations paid heed to appeals inviting them to access such information electronically and refrain from using print editions. This successful drive has already translated into savings.
V. **Austrian Representations Abroad – Honorary Consulates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diplomatic and other missions of the FMEIA</th>
<th>as of 31 Dec. 2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral embassies</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent representations at international organisations</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulates general</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Cultural Fora</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Austrian representations abroad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the evaluation of the network of Austrian representations based on objective criteria (such as the number of consular services performed for Austrians abroad, the intensity and frequency of political visits, trade volumes and Austrian direct investments), it was decided in March to restructure the network of representations abroad in the 2009/2010 budget period. Against this background, the “minus 4, plus 2” concept was prepared which provides for the closure of the embassy in Muscat and the consulates general in Rio de Janeiro, Hamburg and Cape Town on the one hand, and the opening of a consulate general in Frankfurt am Main and an embassy in Baku on the other.

Implementation of this restructuring plan was begun with the closure of the consulate general in Rio de Janeiro on 30 October and the start of provisional operation in Baku on 23 November. The FMEIA also uses this restructuring process as part of a strategic reorientation that will enable Austria to strengthen its presence in the Black Sea region, which is of high political, energy policy and economic importance for the future.

In addition to the representations that fall directly under the FMEIA’s remit, Austria’s international presence also includes 15 development cooperation offices managed by the Austrian Development Agency (**ADA**), the company responsible for handling Austria’s development cooperation activities. Other representations abroad that operate independently of the FMEIA include the Austria Institute (Österreich-Institut, ÖI), which has offered German language courses at nine different locations abroad since 1997, and other representations like the Austrian mission at the OECD in Paris.

In addition, 280 honorary consulates around the world offer valuable support to the professional Austrian Foreign Service. Honorary Consuls, who are eminent figures with close ties to Austria, work for Austria on an honorary basis and also 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 the promotion of economic and cultural relations between Austria and the respective host country.
## Organisational Structure

### I. General Affairs

**Johannes Kyrle**

**I.1 Protocol**
- Melitta Schubert
- Elke Arndt
- Werner Amminger

**I.2 Public International Law**
- Helmut Tichy
- Martin Klein
- Thomas Baier
- Philip Bittner

**I.3 Press and Information**
- Peter Launsky
- Christoph Weidinger
- Franz Hüttegger
- Harald Stranzl

**I.4 European Law**
- Andreas Kumin
- Gregor Schusterschitz

**I.5 Organisation of International Conferences and Matters**
- Werner Durnml

**I.6 Human Rights, International Humanitarian Law and Minority Issues**
- Engelbert Theuermann
- Gerlinde Paschinger
- Elisabeth Riederer

**I.7 Security Affairs**
- Roland Peter Hauser

### II. Political Affairs

**Stefan Lehne**

**II.1 Security Policy Affairs, CFSP**
- Franz Josef Kuglitsch

**II.2 South Tyrol and Southern Europe**
- Georg Stillfried

**II.3 Eastern and South Eastern Europe**
- Franz J. Kuglitsch
- Josef Litschauer

**II.4 Near and Middle East, Maghreb and Mashrek States**
- Friedrich Stift

**II.5 International Organisations**
- Peter Huber

**II.6 Central, Western and Northern Europe**
- Arno Riedl

**II.7 OSCE, Council of Europe**
- Christine Mooser
- Desire Schweitzer
- Robert Müller

**II.8 Arms Control and Disarmament**
- Alexander Marschik
- Roland Šturm
- Wolfgang Banyai
- Brigitta Blaha

**II.9 The Americas, Caribbean, OAS**
- Isabel Rauch
- Franziska Honswitz
- Christian Riedl

**II.10 Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Oceania, ASEM**
- Bernhard Zimbuch
- Herbert Pichler
- Bruno Bilek

**II.11 Sub-Saharan Africa**
- Helmut Freudentshuss
- Andreas Rendl

### III. Economic Affairs and European Integration

**Walter Grahammer**

**III.1 EU General Affairs**
- Michael Schwarzer
- Albert Englisch

**III.2 European Council and General Affairs Council**
- Elisabeth Kehrer

**III.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Trade**
- Investment Protection
- Friedrich Stift

**III.4 EU Enlargement, Trade Relations, EU Trade Policy, Export Promotion, Investment Protection, International Financial Institutions**

**III.5 Coordination of matters relating to COREPER I, Internal Market, Lisbon Agenda, EU Policies, Standards, Employment and Social Questions**
- Karl Müller
- Michael Karing
- Gerhard Eisl

**III.6 Environmental Protection, Transport and Telecommunication**
- Christian Krepela
- Michael Deisser
- Andreas Schmidinger

**III.7 International Energy Questions**
- Eva Hager
- Yvonne Voncin

### IV. Legal and Consular Affairs

**Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger**

**IV.1 Legal Protection, Legal and Administrative Cooperation, General Legal Affairs**
- Gerhard Deiss

**IV.2 Tourist and Cross-Border Traffic; Residence Matters**
- Andrea Ikic-Bohm

**IV.3 Austrians Abroad, Powers of Protection Affairs, Property Affairs, Social and Health Affairs, Citizenship Matters**
- Brigitte Blaha
- Bernhard Faustenhammer

**IV.4 International and EU Cooperation in Justice and Home Affairs, Asylum, Refugee and Migration Affairs**
- Johann Briege
- Regina Rusz
- Christian Feldner

**IV.5 Citizens’ Help Desk, Axel Wech**
- Andreas Somogyi
- Brigitte Hudson

### FEDERAL MINISTER

**Michael Spindelegger**

**Head of Minister’s Office**
- Jochen Danninger

**Staff Unit I:**
- Alexander Schallenberger
### Organisational Structure

#### Inspectorate General
- **Christian LASSMANN**
- **Deputy:** *Wolf-Dietrich HEIM*

#### V. Cultural Policy
- **Emil BRIX**
- **Deputy:** *Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH*

#### VI. Administrative Affairs
- **Nikolaus MARSCHIK**
- **Deputy:** *Thomas WUNDERBALDINGER*

#### VII. Development Cooperation
- **Irene FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL**
- **Deputy:** *Anton MAIR*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Directorate</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Deputy Responsible</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.1</strong></td>
<td>Human Resources and Organisational Management, Accreditation, Notification</td>
<td>Thomas WUNDERBALDINGER</td>
<td>Gustav SCHÜTTE</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V.1a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gerda JOHAM</td>
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<td><strong>V.1b</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Silvia NEUREITER</td>
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<td>Christian MANDL</td>
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<td><strong>V.1d</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Barbara PFEIFFER</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sigurd PACHER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.2</strong></td>
<td>Organisation of Cultural and Scientific Events Abroad</td>
<td>Claudia ROCHEL-LAURICH</td>
<td>Rudolf AGSTNER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.2a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Susanne RANETZKY</td>
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<td><strong>V.2b</strong></td>
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<td>Herbert JÄGER</td>
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<td><strong>V.2c</strong></td>
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<td>Christine DOLLINGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>V.3</strong></td>
<td>Scientific-technological and University Cooperation</td>
<td>Michael WENINGER</td>
<td>Sabine KROSSENBRUNNER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V.3a</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Ernst AICHINGER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V.4</strong></td>
<td>Multilateral Cultural Policy Affairs, UNESCO</td>
<td>Elke ATZLER</td>
<td>Stefan PEHRINGER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>V.4a</strong></td>
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<td>Property Management and Procurement (Directoress VI.4 and VI.5)</td>
<td>Gregor KÖSSLER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VI.2</strong></td>
<td>Foreign Service Compensations and Allowances, Social Security Matters</td>
<td>Michael BRUNNER</td>
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<td><strong>VI.3</strong></td>
<td>Budget and Controlling</td>
<td>Christoph JACKWERTH</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VI.4</strong></td>
<td>Accomodations and Equipment, Legal Matters of Property Management, Diplomatic Pouch Service, Building Services, Health &amp; Safety of Employees</td>
<td>Senta WESSELY-STEINER</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VI.5</strong></td>
<td>Facility Management, Project Management, Procurement</td>
<td>Kurt MELICHAR</td>
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<td><strong>VI.6</strong></td>
<td>Information Technology (IT)</td>
<td>Gerhard MILLETICH</td>
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<td><strong>VI.7</strong></td>
<td>Information Management, Documentation, Knowledge Management</td>
<td>Gottfried LOIBL</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>VII.1</strong></td>
<td>Multilateral Development Cooperation</td>
<td>Maria ROTHESER-SCOTTI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII.2</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation, Development Policy and Strategy</td>
<td>Anton MAIR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII.3</strong></td>
<td>Humanitarian Aid, Food Aid, Relief Fund for International Disasters, Environment and Sustainability Aspects of Development Cooperation</td>
<td>Gerhard WEINBERGER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII.4</strong></td>
<td>Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe, Coordination in Austria, Information</td>
<td>Marianne FELDMANN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII.5</strong></td>
<td>Planning and Programme Matters concerning Development Cooperation and Cooperation with Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Hannes HAUSER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>VII.6</strong></td>
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(as of 31 December 2009)
N. Selected Documents

This chapter contains selected documents dealing with the FMEIA’s priorities in 2009.


United Nations Security Council

Security Council

Distr.: General
11 November 2009

Resolution 1894 (2009)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 6216th meeting, on 11 November 2009

The Security Council,


Reaffirming its commitment to the Purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as set out in Article 1 (1-4) of the Charter, and to the Principles of the Charter as set out in Article 2 (1-7) of the Charter, including its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States, and respect for the sovereignty of all States,

Noting that this year marks the tenth anniversary of the progressive consideration by the Security Council of the protection of civilians in armed conflict as a thematic issue; and acknowledging the enduring need for the Security Council and Member States to strengthen further the protection of civilians in armed conflict,

Noting further that this year also marks the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which together with their Additional Protocols constitute the basis for the legal framework for the protection of civilians in armed conflict,

Recognizing that States bear the primary responsibility to respect and ensure the human rights of their citizens, as well as all individuals within their territory as provided for by relevant international law,

Reaffirming that parties to armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians,

Reaffirming the relevant provisions of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including paragraphs 138 and 139 thereof regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity,

Reiterating its deep regret that civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in situations of armed conflict,

* Reissued for technical reasons.
Stressing the particular impact that armed conflict has on women and children, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as on other civilians who may have specific vulnerabilities including persons with disabilities and older persons, and stressing the protection and assistance needs of all affected civilian populations,

Noting the adoption of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (2009),

Noting with grave concern the severity and prevalence of constraints on humanitarian access, as well as the frequency and gravity of attacks against humanitarian personnel and objects and the significant implications of such attacks for humanitarian operations,

Recognizing the need for States in or emerging from armed conflict to restore or build accountable security institutions and independent national judicial systems,

Recalling the inclusion of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the statutes of the ad hoc international criminal tribunals and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and emphasizing in this regard the principle of complementarity,

Recognizing the importance of reparations programmes in response to serious violations of international humanitarian law and gross human rights violations,

Recognizing the importance of empowering vulnerable civilians through education and training as a means to support efforts to halt and prevent abuses committed against civilians in situations of armed conflict,

Recognizing the valuable contribution to the protection of children in armed conflict by the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict and the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, including its conclusions and recommendations issued in line with resolution 1612 (2005), and recalling resolution 1882 (2009), which aims to strengthen the protection of children in situations of armed conflict,

Recalling its decision in resolution 1888 (2009) to address violence against women and children in situations of armed conflict by requesting the Secretary-General to appoint a special representative and to identify and take the appropriate measures to deploy rapidly a team of experts to situations of particular concern with respect to sexual violence in armed conflict,

Noting the practice of briefings to Security Council members by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on behalf of the United Nations’ humanitarian community, both through formal and informal channels,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians of 29 May 2009 (S/2009/277) and its annex on constraints on humanitarian access, which identify the core challenges to the effective protection of civilians, namely enhancing compliance with international law; enhancing compliance by non-State armed groups with their obligations under international law; enhancing protection through more effective and better resourced United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions; enhancing humanitarian access; and enhancing accountability for violations,
Welcoming the proposals, conclusions and recommendations on the protection of civilians included in the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group (A/63/19) and the important work conducted by the Security Council Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, including its efforts aimed at enhancing the implementation of protection mandates,

Recalling the statement of its President of 5 August 2009 (S/PRST/2009/24) and welcoming ongoing efforts to strengthen UN peacekeeping,

Noting that United Nations peacekeeping missions constitute one of several means at the United Nations’ disposal to protect civilians in situations of armed conflict,

1. Demands that parties to armed conflict comply strictly with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, as well as to implement all relevant decisions of the Security Council and in this regard, urges them to take all required measures to respect and protect the civilian population and meet its basic needs;

2. Reiterates its condemnation in the strongest terms of attacks in situations of armed conflict directed against civilians as such and other protected persons or objects as well as indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks and the utilisation of the presence of civilians to render certain points, areas or military forces immune from military operations, as flagrant violations of international humanitarian law and demands that all parties immediately put an end to such practices;

3. Notes that the deliberate targeting of civilians as such and other protected persons, and the commission of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of applicable international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict may constitute a threat to international peace and security, and reaffirms in this regard its readiness to consider such situations and, where necessary, to adopt appropriate steps;

4. Reiterates its willingness to respond to situations of armed conflict where civilians are being targeted or humanitarian assistance to civilians is being deliberately obstructed, including through the consideration of appropriate measures at the Security Council’s disposal in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

5. Reiterates its call on States that have not already done so to consider signing, ratifying or acceding to the relevant instruments of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and to take appropriate legislative, judicial and administrative measures to implement their obligations under these instruments;

6. Demands that all States and parties to armed conflict fully implement all relevant decisions of the Security Council and in this regard cooperate fully with United Nations peacekeeping missions and Country Teams in the follow-up and implementation of these resolutions;

7. Calls upon all parties concerned,

(a) to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information about international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law;
(b) to provide training for public officials, members of armed forces and armed groups, personnel associated to armed forces, civilian police and law enforcement personnel, and members of the judicial and legal professions; and to raise awareness among civil society and the civilian population on relevant international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, as well as on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations, to achieve full and effective compliance;

(c) to ensure that orders and instructions issued to armed forces and other relevant actors are in compliance with applicable international law, and that they are observed, inter alia, by establishing effective disciplinary procedures, central to which must be the strict adherence to the principle of command responsibility to support compliance with international humanitarian law;

(d) to seek, where appropriate, support from United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions, as well as United Nations Country Teams and the International Committee of the Red Cross and, where appropriate, other members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, on training and awareness raising on international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law;

8. Emphasizes the importance of addressing in its country specific deliberations the compliance of parties to armed conflict with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law; notes the range of existing methods used, on a case by case basis, for gathering information on alleged violations of applicable international law relating to the protection of civilians and underlines the importance in this regard of receiving information that is timely, objective, accurate and reliable;

9. Considers the possibility, to this end, of using the International Fact-Finding Commission established by Article 90 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions;

10. Affirms its strong opposition to impunity for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law and emphasizes in this context the responsibility of States to comply with their relevant obligations to end impunity and to thoroughly investigate and prosecute persons responsible for war crimes, genocide, crimes against humanity or other serious violations of international humanitarian law in order to prevent violations, avoid their recurrence and seek sustainable peace, justice, truth and reconciliation;

11. Recalls that accountability for such serious crimes must be ensured by taking measures at the national level, and by enhancing international cooperation in support of national mechanisms, draws attention to the full range of justice and reconciliation mechanisms to be considered, including national, international and “mixed” criminal courts and tribunals, and truth and reconciliation commissions, as well as national reparation programs for victims and institutional reforms; and underlines the Security Council’s role in ending impunity;

12. Reaffirms the Security Council’s role in promoting an environment that is conducive to the facilitation of humanitarian access to those in need;

13. Stresses the importance for all, within the framework of humanitarian assistance, of upholding and respecting the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence;
14. *Stresses* the importance for all parties to armed conflict to cooperate with humanitarian personnel in order to allow and facilitate access to civilian populations affected by armed conflict;

15. *Expresses* its intention to:

   (a) Call on parties to armed conflict to comply with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law to take all required steps to protect civilians and to facilitate the rapid and unimpeded passage of relief consignments, equipment and personnel,

   (b) Mandate UN peacekeeping and other relevant missions, where appropriate, to assist in creating conditions conducive to safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian assistance,

16. *Further expresses* its intention to:

   (a) Consistently condemn and call for the immediate cessation of all acts of violence and other forms of intimidation deliberately directed against humanitarian personnel,

   (b) Call on parties to armed conflict to comply with the obligations applicable to them under international humanitarian law to respect and protect humanitarian personnel and consignments used for humanitarian relief operations,

   (c) Take appropriate steps in response to deliberate attacks against humanitarian personnel;

17. *Invites* the Secretary-General to continue the systematic monitoring and analysis of constraints on humanitarian access, to include as appropriate observations and recommendations in his briefings and country-specific reports to the Council;

18. *Recalls* its determination to upgrade the strategic oversight of peacekeeping operations mindful of the important role peacekeeping operations play for the protection of civilians and *reaffirms* its support to the efforts made by the Secretary-General to review peacekeeping operations and to provide enhanced planning and support and *renews* its encouragement to deepen these efforts, in partnership with troop and police contributing countries and other relevant stakeholders;

19. *Reaffirms* its practice of ensuring that mandates of UN peacekeeping and other relevant missions include, where appropriate and on a case-by-case basis, provisions regarding the protection of civilians, *stresses* that mandated protection activities must be given priority in decisions about the use of available capacity and resources, including information and intelligence resources, in the implementation of mandates; and *recognizes*, that the protection of civilians when and as mandated requires a coordinated response from all relevant mission components;

20. *Reaffirms also* the importance of entrusting peacekeeping and other relevant missions that are tasked with the protection of civilians with clear, credible and achievable mandates, based on accurate and reliable information on the situation on the ground, and a realistic assessment of threats against civilians and missions, made in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, and *further reaffirms* the importance of a greater awareness in the Security Council of the resource and
field support implications of its decisions and stresses the necessity to ensure the execution of the afore-mentioned mandates to protect civilians in the field;

21. Recognizes the necessity to take into account the protection needs of civilians in situations of armed conflict, in particular women and children, in the early phase of mandate drafting and throughout the lifecycle of United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions and in this regard underlines the importance of engagement with the countries concerned and of close consultation with the Secretariat, troop and police contributing countries, and other relevant actors;

22. Recognizes also the need for comprehensive operational guidance on peacekeeping missions’ tasks and responsibilities in the implementation of protection of civilians mandates and requests the Secretary-General to develop in close consultation with Member States including troop and police contributing countries and other relevant actors, an operational concept for the protection of civilians, and to report back on progress made;

23. Requests the Secretary-General, in consultation with relevant actors, to ensure that peacekeeping missions with protection of civilians mandates, in keeping with the strategic plans that guide their deployment, conduct mission-wide planning, pre-deployment training, and senior leadership training on the protection of civilians and requests troop and police contributing countries to ensure the provision of appropriate training of their personnel participating in UN peacekeeping and other relevant missions to heighten the awareness and responsiveness to protection concerns, including training on HIV/AIDS and zero tolerance of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping missions;

24. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that all relevant peacekeeping missions with protection mandates incorporate comprehensive protection strategies into the overall mission implementation plans and contingency plans which include assessments of potential threats and options for crisis response and risk mitigation and establish priorities, actions and clear roles and responsibilities under the leadership and coordination of the SRSG, with the full involvement of all relevant actors and in consultation with United Nations Country teams;

25. Requests the Secretary-General to ensure that United Nations missions provide local communities with adequate information with regard to the role of the mission and in this regard ensure coordination between a United Nations mission and relevant humanitarian agencies;

26. Takes note of practical measures taken by ongoing peacekeeping missions and United Nations Country Teams to enhance the protection of civilians in the field, and requests the Secretary-General to include best practice in his next report on protection of civilians to the Council;

27. Reaffirms its practice of requiring benchmarks, as and where appropriate, to measure and review progress made in the implementation of peacekeeping mandates and stresses the importance of including indicators of progress regarding the protection of civilians in such benchmarks for relevant missions;

28. Emphasizes the need for a comprehensive approach to facilitate the implementation of protection mandates through promoting economic growth, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for, and protection of human
rights, and in this regard, urges the cooperation of Member States and underlines the importance of a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach by the principal organs of the United Nations, cooperating with one another and within their respective mandates;

29. Notes that the excessive accumulation and destabilizing effect of small arms and light weapons pose a considerable impediment to the provision of humanitarian assistance and have a potential to exacerbate and prolong conflicts, endanger civilians and undermine security and the confidence required for a return to peace and stability, calls on parties to armed conflict to take all feasible precautions to protect the civilian population, including children, from the effects of landmines and other explosive remnants of war, and in this regard, encourages the international community to support country efforts in clearing landmines and other explosive remnants of war and to provide assistance for the care, rehabilitation and economic and social reintegration of victims, including persons with disabilities;

30. Reiterates the importance of the Aide Memoire on the protection of civilians (S/PRST/2009/1) as a practical tool that provides a basis for improved analysis and diagnosis of key protection issues, particularly during deliberations on peacekeeping mandates and stresses the need to implement the approaches set out therein on a more regular and consistent basis, taking into account the particular circumstances of each conflict situation;

31. Recognizes the important role of the Secretary-General in providing timely information to the Security Council on protection of civilians in armed conflict in particular through thematic and country specific reports and through briefings;

32. Requests the Secretary-General to include in his reports to the Council on country-specific situations more comprehensive and detailed information relating to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including on protection-related incidents and actions taken by parties to armed conflict to implement their obligations to respect and protect the civilian population, including information specific to the protection needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, women, children and other vulnerable groups;

33. Requests the Secretary-General to develop guidance for UN peacekeeping and other relevant missions on the reporting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict with a view to streamlining reporting and enhancing the Council’s monitoring and oversight of the implementation of protection mandates of UN peacekeeping and other missions;

34. Stresses the importance of consultation and cooperation between the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other relevant organisations including regional organisations to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict;

35. Requests the Secretary-General to submit his next report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict by November 2010;

36. Decides to remain seized of the matter.
II. Statement by Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians, New York, United Nations Security Council, 11 November 2009

Mr. Secretary General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ten years ago the Security Council took the unanimous decision to start addressing the protection of civilians in armed conflicts in a systematic manner. Today we are still facing tremendous challenges and civilians more than ever have to pay the price of war: they have to flee their homes, they become victims of violence, armed attacks and rape. In armed conflicts all over the world, United Nations peacekeeping missions and humanitarian organizations do their utmost to alleviate the suffering of civilians, including women and children. But more needs to be done to improve the protection of civilians on the ground.

This is why for Austria the protection of civilians is a key priority. This is why we took the initiative to present a draft resolution on protection of civilians on the occasion of the tenth anniversary. This draft resolution aims to address existing gaps in the protection work of the United Nations and lays out concrete measures to improve the protection of civilians on the ground.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Council for their constructive work over the last weeks. We also highly commend the Secretary General for his latest report on protection of civilians.

We – the international community – have to do better. We need to live up to our shared responsibility to effectively respond to situations where the safety and security of civilians is in danger. No conflict justifies breaches of international humanitarian law. No conflict justifies the refusal of access for humanitarian workers to civilians in need. No conflict justifies impunity for those who have committed serious crimes against civilians.

The Security Council has a key role to play. The Council has a broad range of tools at its disposal to ensure compliance by all parties with their obligations under international law to protect civilians, to facilitate access for humanitarian aid, and to ensure accountability for serious crimes against civilians.

The protection of civilians is today at the core of UN peacekeeping. Since 1999, the Council has started to mandate UN peacekeeping missions to protect civilians from attacks. The presence of UN peacekeepers generates global expectations, as well as local aspirations, to protect vulnerable communities. However, we still do not have a common understanding of what peacekeepers can and should do in the implementation of such protection mandates. We believe that an operational concept, mission-wide protection strategies and improved pre-deployment training on the protection of civilians will
help to close this gap between Security Council mandates and their implementation. This will also contribute to ensure the credibility of UN peacekeeping missions. There is a need for clear and achievable mandates, based on accurate and reliable information and an assessment of threats to civilians as well as to peacekeepers on the ground.

Today’s debate and the draft resolution before us provide an important opportunity to take stock of the progress made so far, and to send a clear signal of our commitment to the protection of civilians. I hope that the discussions will provide further guidance in fulfilling our obligation to better protect those in need.

Thank You!

III. Statement by Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the United Nations Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 2 September 2009

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament today.

Austria assumed its Presidency at an important point in time. This year, the Conference finally adopted a Programme of Work after more than a decade of stalemate. This is a positive development, long overdue.

So I do not need to speak about deadlocks and missed opportunities of the past. Let me focus on recent positive developments in arms control and disarmament and their implications for our future.

The year 2009 has seen one paramount development: The goal of nuclear disarmament and the eventual total elimination of nuclear weapons was put back on the global agenda. I welcome the 5-Points-Plan for Disarmament proposed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon which I had the opportunity to discuss with him a few days ago in Austria.

I also welcome the recent positive statements that have been made by US-President Obama in Prague and Cairo and by Russian President Medvedev. And only a few weeks ago, Chinese Foreign Minister Yang underlined China’s goal of a nuclear weapons free world here in this very room.

Austria had promoted the vision of a world free of nuclear weapons throughout the Cold War, when only a few countries possessed nuclear capabilities. Since proliferation has introduced new threats from States and non-State actors, striving for this goal is now all the more necessary.
Our vision is now shared by the most important nuclear powers. But how far has this vision translated into concrete action? We can identify two developments:

1. First, direct bilateral negotiations: We see a renewed readiness to engage in bilateral negotiations. The commitment by Presidents Obama and Medvedev to negotiate a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty by the end of this year is a good example.

2. Second, the global atmosphere in multilateral arms control negotiations has changed: Preparations for the 2010 NPT-Review Conference show a markedly better atmosphere. Initiatives by states and civil society all around the world such as the Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament on 24 September ensure global ownership and demonstrate a new readiness to engage in dialogue.

But let me be clear: positive declarations, good atmosphere and universal interest also need real implementation and compliance. The NPT can only fulfil its promise of peace if all states adhere to their obligations. Similarly, the Programme of Work of the Conference on Disarmament needs to be implemented to become a real achievement.

This brings me to my next point – our expectations for the future.

First, let me start with the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty CTBT, a Treaty which originated in this Council Chamber. The deplorable nuclear test conducted by North Korea in May has made clear that the entry into force of the CTBT is overdue. As co-chair together with Costa Rica, Austria has been deeply involved in efforts to secure this goal over the past two years.

Let me thus use this opportunity to once again appeal to those States who have not yet done so to accede to the CTBT as soon as possible. I am encouraged by the recent commitment of President Obama to pursue U.S. ratification and China’s comments in this regard. Let me also appeal to all states to show their support to the Treaty at the Article XIV Ministerial Conference in New York later this month. Please help ensure that your country participates.

Secondly, Austria believes that a comprehensive Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) – a treaty that still has to emerge from this Chamber – would significantly contribute to nuclear disarmament. Reliable techniques for monitoring and verification have been developed over the past years. The potential positive impact of such a Treaty has been confirmed many times. The IAEA is ready to make an important contribution. It now requires the political will of governments and the efforts of skilled negotiators to make it a reality.

It is my sincere hope that the new spirit in the Conference on Disarmament will soon enable it to proceed with actual work and start negotiations on an FMCT.
Finally, when we talk about expectations for the upcoming year, we must mention the NPT Review Conference which will take place next May in New York. The Preparatory Committee has shown a willingness to achieve a meaningful outcome this time (after the failure of the 2005-Conference). Today, we see a broad understanding that the dangers of nuclear technology need to be contained in a manner that creates trust and confidence among all states. The NPT-Conference will demonstrate whether we are capable of transforming this positive atmosphere into real progress.

Austria will present and support initiatives aimed at substantial progress in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and a global system to effectively control the nuclear fuel cycle. This should help to avoid tensions such as the ones we currently witness in regard to Iran’s nuclear program.

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

Austria attaches great importance to arms control also in the area of conventional weapons such as landmines, cluster munitions and small arms and light weapons. Let me make three brief comments in this respect:

First, landmines: Austria’s objective for the Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty to be held later this year in Cartagena, Columbia, is to work for a strong Cartagena Action Plan, which will serve as a clear guide to States and bring us closer to a world free of mines. One priority for us is to improve assistance to landmine survivors.

In this respect Austria sponsored – together with Norway and civil society partners – a project to examine the global impact of the Ottawa Treaty and what remains to be done to improve the situation of survivors. The report will be presented here today right after this meeting. Let me just use this opportunity to encourage all States who have not yet done so to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty. Time is ripe for the international community not only to review its stance on nuclear weapons but also to finally eradicate this terrible weapon.

Second, cluster munitions: I encourage States to ratify the Convention on Cluster Munitions. So far 17 States have ratified. It is our strong hope that the Convention will receive the necessary 30 ratifications to enter into force before the end of this year. To support this, Austria has engaged in a worldwide campaign and will support a Cluster Munitions Conference in Indonesia in November.

Third, small arms and light weapons are a major security threat in parts of the world. Former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has once called them the “real weapons of mass destruction”: Every year, hundreds of thousands of people are killed. The UN Programme of Action is a significant step forward. Austria supports its implementation on the ground, especially in Africa.

To stop illicit arms trade, Austria supports the conclusion of a legally binding international Arms Trade Treaty. As a producing and exporting country of
small arms, Austria feels a special responsibility to engage in this process and will also host the concluding conference of the global EU-UNIDIR[1] Project in February 2010. We hope that this conference in Vienna will provide positive momentum and enable the conclusion of a treaty in the near future.

Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,

One thing is clear: There is no lack of work in arms control and disarmament today and the international community is responding positively.

In order to succeed, I count on the new flexibility of the nuclear weapons states and the constructive contributions of all other states, but also on the commitment and expertise of civil society. Throughout the years, NGOs and private citizens have remained important motors of the disarmament and arms control process.

Austria has always underlined that disarmament and arms control must be an open, participatory process to succeed. Protecting the world from the harm caused by weapons is a global project and needs the active support from all of us.

In this respect, I would like to thank you, Mr. Secretary, for your tireless efforts, and this year’s other Presidencies – Vietnam, Zimbabwe, Algeria, Argentina and Australia – for their excellent cooperation in the Conference on Disarmament. I wish you all the necessary energy for a good conclusion of this year’s session and an early and effective resumption next year.

Thank you for your attention.

[1] UN Institute for Disarmament Research

IV. Address by Dr. Michael Spindelegger, Federal Minister for European and International Affairs at the Danube Forum, Linz, 29 June 2009

Thank you very much, Ambassador,
Esteemed Commissioner Danuta Hübner,
Dear Foreign Minister Gordan Jandroković of Croatia,
State Secretaries and Deputy Ministers,
Dear Governor of the Federal Province of Upper Austria Pühringer,
Presidents,
Dear Erhard Busek,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitation to attend today’s Danube Forum here in Upper Austria. Let me start by thanking Governor
Josef Pühringer very warmly for all his efforts. He is a governor who takes initiatives; under his leadership the Province of Upper Austria is an important partner for the Foreign Ministry. The proactive foreign policy pursued at province level by Upper Austria is not regarded as competition but as a welcome partnership we appreciate at the Ministry. In this spirit, I would also like to take the opportunity to thank you, Governor, for having taken the initiative to organise this afternoon’s event. This is a true and active partnership, which will move things forward, bringing benefits to all.

I would like to take this opportunity to discuss three key issues, focussing particularly on those aspects that are of special importance to all of us

Let me start by taking a closer look at the River Danube and the new Europe. Governor Pühringer has quite rightly pointed out that the fall of the Iron Curtain changed the world, marking the beginning of a new era. Only last Friday did we, Ambassador, commemorate these events at the Hungarian border together. Only by listening to contemporary witnesses who are still extremely emotional when talking about these events, seeing how much thinking about the fall of the Iron Curtain still moves them and how strong the feelings in connection with these events were, one can actually begin to realise the scope of opportunities that were opened up by this event. The fall of the Iron Curtain thus marked the dawning of a new age of undreamt of perspectives. This held particularly true for the countries bordering the Danube.

The enhanced cooperation among federal provinces, regions and countries bordering the Danube and especially among the people living in the region constitutes the basis for an incredible economic momentum. And I am convinced that it is this very region along the Danube that will be one of the priority regions where in particular economic development and especially this cooperation process, which we intend to shape a little today, will bring benefits for us all.

The River Danube has become a symbol for a reunited Europe. It connects the old and the new Member States of the European Union. All of its headstreams rise within the European Union and the mouth of the Danube is also located in the EU. The countries in its catchment area have seen very different developments. Some are already part of the Union while others still have some way to go towards Union membership, with many of the latter already belonging to the EU’s Eastern Partnership. Along this river we therefore have Member States, candidate countries, potential accession candidates and some countries which might probably not be able to attain membership.

I therefore believe that with the Danube as our common link we will have a major opportunity to combine all these aspects: classical European policy, combined with offering perspectives to countries which also want to be a part of it. We want all countries along the Danube to cooperate at the economic, political, cultural and inter-personal levels, we want people to collaborate and network and thus be able to prosper together.
The second idea I would like to share with you today deals with the Strategy for the Danube Region. When I took office I made this Danube Cooperation Process one of the priorities on my agenda, also with a view to the special focus Austrian foreign policy is placing on the Black Sea and the Black Sea region. Together with Romania we initiated a project, we went to Brussels to meet Commissioner Hübner, we tried to give some shape to our ideas – and within a few months we succeeded in turning these ideas into a full-fledged initiative. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Commissioner Hübner very much for supporting this process and for having been open and positive towards these ideas. This is something we could not have necessarily taken for granted, because I had seen that we were not the only ones in Europe to propose such ideas and that other regions too were exercising a lot of pressure to have their regional cooperation processes raised to the rank of strategy.

There is already a high level of cooperation among the Mediterranean countries in the EU – they have even formed a Union for the Mediterranean. There is a Baltic Sea Strategy under which the Union’s Nordic countries aim to somehow assume a pioneering role in shaping cooperation. We have an Eastern Partnership under which six countries embark towards a new future with the European Union. Considering all this I thought that we in Central Europe, who are indeed located at the River Danube, should also join forces and define a priority region which is recognised by the European Union. I am very pleased that we succeeded in our efforts. At its most recent meeting two weeks ago, the European Council charged the Commission with preparing a Strategy for the Danube Region by the end of 2010. This will enable us to set about implementing this strategy immediately after it has been established, starting during the Hungarian EU Council Presidency in 2011.

We have to start work on the content of our strategy now. Since we have a starting point, we can take the opportunity today to describe in more detail how this cooperation will work. Let me outline a few parameters and key elements: we do not intend to monopolise this Strategy for the Danube Region. It is a joint strategy involving all the countries bordering the Danube. Although Austria and Romania have taken the initiative, all countries are partners on an equal footing under this strategy.

The European Commission plays the most important role in terms of designing it. Although the Commission is charged with preparing the Strategy, we will of course give it our support by providing very concrete assistance. As a next step I would like to organise an informal meeting in Vienna in autumn, bringing together the countries involved in order to jointly specify these projects in some more detail.

It is beneficial not only to include the individual countries in the preparatory processes but also to attach special importance to the regions at this stage. This is why I am so pleased that the Danube countries have already accomplished important preparatory activities in this regard in their Work-
ing Community of the Danube Regions meeting that was held this morning. In this context, we also intend establishing a similar partnership involving cities and regions. Furthermore, we will also invite members from the various sectors of civil society to cooperate with us. The central topics to be dealt with under this concept are self-evident. If you are preparing a Strategy for the Danube, then the River Danube itself will necessarily be at the heart of your relevant considerations. That is why navigation and transport play such an important role. We will define a special type of cooperation in connection with the cultural assets found along the borders of the Danube. Environmental protection is another very important concern of ours – just like many further issues such as the pressing topic of flood protection.

But we do not have to reinvent the wheel: we will build on what we have, what the Working Community of the Danube Regions has already achieved, and I am very grateful for the work they have done. It is thus very important to fully include particularly the Working Community in our considerations. Often you just need to put threads together rather than trying to come up with entirely new developments. This is why I believe that we will be able to draw on the rich knowledge of figures like Erhard Busek, who has done a lot of preparatory work with his Institute for the Danube Region and Central Europe. Moreover, his vast professional experience, particularly as regards the Western Balkans, will also make him a valuable partner.

This brings me to the potential for the future.

The Danube connects more countries than any other river in Europe. György Dalos once called it “the multi-national river”. It is thus also an emotional point of reference. Since time immemorial, it has been a source of inspiration for artists and poets from the various countries along its borders. And when discussing strengthening European identity we must not forget the importance of emotional bonds.

I have already mentioned the Working Community of the Danube Regions. It is composed of 38 members from ten different Danube countries, was set up in 1990 and focuses particularly on culture – which is a valuable supplement and basis for our work. As a unifying element, the Danube is the starting point for peace, stability and prosperity in Europe – common values which we strive to safeguard also in the future.

In the working programme defined for the Working Community of the Danube Regions for the year 2009, the Upper Austrian chair also highlights this dimension. A major factor in this context is economic development. The countries bordering the Danube can act as a link to the Black Sea region – which according to economists will, after China and India, be the area to register the strongest growth following a crisis. This is why we need to lay the foundations for future success in the Black Sea region right now. We need to form links with this region and have to jointly work on establishing and strengthening them. This holds particularly true for the Danube countries,
which by virtue of being located along its borders, literally pave the way from the source of the Danube to its mouth in the Black Sea Region.

It is Austria’s goal to deepen the political, economic, cultural and interpersonal relations we already have to the Black Sea Region and open up the potential this important region has for the future. This is why we intend, particularly in these times of crisis, to pursue an active neighbourhhood policy in our relations with these countries.

We must already focus on the time after the crisis and make sure that we are well positioned when the economy picks up again. This is why we will be holding a conference in Vienna this coming Monday involving all ambassadors and trade delegates from the region as well as all Austrian companies with an interest in this region in order to define the next steps.

Let me briefly summarise the goals we have set ourselves for the future: we aim to strengthen the Danube region by launching several forward-looking initiatives. We aim to strengthen the countries in the Danube region. We aim to establish closer links among the countries in this region. We aim to use the large, and partly untapped, number of synergies and the huge potential for the future with a view to promoting cultural, political and economic development and, most of all, foster the human dimension.

Because – and this brings me to the end of my address, Ladies and Gentlemen – the Danube creates a link between people and their countries, opening up a whole new area for shaping European policy.

Thank you very much for your attention.

V. Address by Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the symposium “Identity and Participation: Cross Cultural and Muslim Youth in Europe”, Vienna, 29 June 2009

Lieber Hans Winkler,
Dear President Jorge Sampaio,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you to this initiative of the Austrian Ministry for European and International Affairs in co-operation with the Alliance of Civilizations.

The Alliance of Civilizations – under the able guidance of High Representative Jorge Sampaio – has a major task in promoting dialogue on the global level. From the outset, Austria has been an active partner in this endeavour. And this April in Istanbul, I have announced Austria’s offer to host the Fifth Annual Forum of the Alliance of Civilizations in 2012.
Last December, together with the League of Arab States, I hosted the international conference “Europe and the Arab World – Connecting Partners in Dialogue” with expert sessions and a ministerial round table in the Hofburg in Vienna. A topic of the conference, which met with particular interest, was “Promoting Intercultural Dialogue and Youth Participation in Politics and Civil Society”.

Consequently, we decided to put the focus of today’s symposium on how to contribute to the successful participation of young people with cross-cultural and Muslim background in Europe and on how to further the process of integration.

The focus is on Europe, because – with all its diversity and pluralism – Europe is still facing insufficiencies regarding effective intercultural competences on all levels. A recent report by the Vienna based European Agency for Fundamental Rights states a high level of xenophobia as well as negative views on Islam and Muslims in Europe.

There is need for commitment and there is need for action.

1. First and foremost there is the need for an adjusted narrative in Europe. Immigration in the 20th century has led to a great variety of beliefs and of quite diverse Muslim communities in Europe. In 1950, about 800,000 Muslims lived in Europe. Today, the figure ranges between 15 and 20 million, representing 3% to 7% of the population of European countries.

The presence of Islam in Europe, however, is not a recent phenomenon. Islam dates back to the eighth century and has since been an autochthonous religion on our continent. But still today, people – including politicians and populists contorting facts – are operating with stereotypes and clichés, thus nurturing tension, exclusion and confrontation in our societies.

There is a need to re-think and appreciate our rich national histories and to raise awareness in our societies for the long-standing presence of Islam in Europe. This important endeavour does in no way imply giving up our identities. And fighting stereotypes and discrimination does not imply to ignore differences.

Our major intent is to foster trust. Trust is the precondition for an open and – wherever and whenever necessary – critical dialogue, which addresses cultural traditions, religious attitudes and interpretations, which might not be in line with or even be opposed to common European values.

2. Strong democracies build on active participation and ownership.

European integration has a solid foundation in the “Enlightenment” with its key elements: reason, the separation of state and religion, individual and political rights and freedoms, self-determination of the individual and equal rights for men and women.

A great challenge for current European integration is to sustain pluralism while re-enforcing unity through democratic participation.
In the interest of a democratic and in all aspects well-functioning Europe we must jointly address the complexities of identity issues in our increasingly multiethnic and multicultural societies. Only the collective management of diversity in legal, political and social terms can lead to ownership in a democratic society and to a “citizenship of the heart”.

Surveys prove that in the light of today’s overall economic and social challenges, the great majority of Muslims in Europe does not seek anything different from citizens with other beliefs. Our co-citizens want to make a decent living, to raise their children and to secure their future in accordance with our legal and democratic systems.

However, for successful societies and a successful Europe we need even more than that. We need active participation by all our citizens. We need the joint commitment to build a European identity all European citizens can identify with on the basis of our common principles enshrined in the European Charter for Fundamental Rights.

Much too often, the quest for spiritual and religious identity among young people with migrant or Muslim background meets with a harsh reality, in particular with the lack of education and jobs. The lack of perspectives meets with feelings of exclusion. There is a real danger that young people are misled and that identity and religion are turned into ‘radical alternatives’ to constructive democratic participation in our societies.

Our aim is to foster a strong, inclusive European identity on the basis of our common values. Our engagement in this regard builds on the manifold concepts and initiatives that already exist. I am sure that this symposium will contribute to the visibility of these endeavours and to a productive exchange on good practices to the benefit of all of us.

3. There is continued need for dialogue.

Cardinal Franz König, who was one of the great personalities of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue, stated in 1997: “On the way to Europe, the question for the common spiritual heritage of the past arises as a task for the future … It is about a positive force that evolves from a ‘real’ ecumenism“.

This statement holds also true for the dialogue between Christians and Muslims. There is a strong expectation of people that religions contribute to mutual understanding, to preserving a peaceful society, to conflict resolution and to peace building. We need these positive forces for the future of Europe.

Strategies for dialogue, intercultural competences and participation have to include religions. At the same time, they need to go far beyond addressing differences in religion. I am, in particular, thinking of the common challenges young people are facing, including the visions they have regarding their future in Europe.
Austria, where the legal recognition of Islam goes back to the year 1912, disposes of a sustainable framework for dialogue and tools, which are of great relevance for integration. Just a few important examples:

- With the support of my ministry, the first and the second Conference of European Imams took place in 2003 in Graz and in 2006 in Vienna. The third Conference of European Imams is envisaged to take place in December in Linz, European Cultural Capital 2009.
- We have religious education in Islam in Austrian public schools;
- A study programme entitled “Islamic religious education” to train teachers of Islam for public schools in Austria at the University of Vienna.
- The Vienna International Christian Islamic Summer University.
- In autumn 2009, university study programmes on “Muslims in Europe” and “Muslim Community Studies” will start with the support of my ministry.

Austria is actively involved in promoting dialogue in the framework of the European Union and international organisations like the United Nations and the OSCE.

Vienna has a long and valued tradition for dialogue in Europe, even during the tragic period of the Cold War division of our continent, which the peoples of Europe overcame peacefully 20 years ago. I have the strong intent to build on this tradition and to even strengthen this commitment and engagement of Austria as a hub for dialogue and peace.

In the context of Austria’s current membership in the United Nations Security Council we intend to make use of the potential of dialogue to enhance international peace and security. We thus suggest an informal meeting in 2010 on the topic “The Dialogue of Cultures and the Preservation of International Peace and Security”.

Integration is a continuous process and all parts of society need to get sensitized. In this regard, I hope that today’s symposium will contribute to dismantle stereotypes and the dichotomy between Islam and the West.

With this symposium we also wish to send a strong signal of encouragement to our young co-citizens with cross cultural and Muslim background to use their talents and potential, to follow role models and to join the forces of commitment and participation to their own benefit and to the benefit of our European societies.

I hope that we can follow-up today’s initiative together with the Alliance of Civilizations in other countries and regions of the world, because identity, participation, religious and cultural pluralism and youth are issues of major global concern.

I wish the symposium every success.
VI. Address by Federal Minister Dr. Michael Spindelegger at the Europe Congress organised by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs “1989 – 2009. Divided – Reunited: Start into a New Europe”, Vienna, 28 May 2009

Esteemed Federal President,
Members of the Federal Government,
Dear Foreign Minister Peter Balazs from Hungary,
Dear Guests from our neighbouring countries,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular privilege and great honour for me to join the Federal President in opening the European Congress “1989 – 2009. Divided – Reunited: Start into a New Europe” here in the Vienna Hofburg.

Thinking back twenty years ago, memories of a deeply divided continent come to mind. A Europe divided by 5,000 kilometres of barbed wire fences, of zones you could not just simply cross or pass through. More than 700 kilometres of the Austrian border was located at this “dead border”. Indeed, this divide consisted of much more than barbed wire, it was actually an ideological divide, a trench running across Europe. Contacts between peoples, between individuals and between states were limited to formalities. There was hardly any regional or cross border activity at all. Companies and people left this area along the “dead border”. All that remained was a sense of hopelessness and lack of perspectives.

I witnessed all this first hand when I worked in the legal department of the district authority in Gmünd in Lower Austria, my native province. I personally experienced life next to the border, hearing shots almost every night or seeing the light of the illumination rockets that were being fired into the night sky.

Once I witnessed an accident right at the border: a car driven into the roadside ditch, an Austrian lying in the vehicle badly injured. We were in the ambulance car and just five metres down the road ahead of us lay the injured man. But it was not possible to rescue the man because the soldiers from the other side were there. They arrested him and interrogated him for three days on suspicion of spying. This was the reality of life at the border and people living there regularly witnessed or experienced such events.

But there was something else too at the time, something which should inspire us with courage: there was hope nourished by people’s moral courage. Berlin 1953, Hungary 1956, Prague 1968. There were people at the time who fought with great bravery against Communist tyranny, rejecting and combating it.
These people carried hope in their hearts, firmly believing in a different future, convinced that changes would be possible. This incredible conviction was probably what gave impetus to the way in which things evolved in 1989, for the changes that were to come and this growing spirit of optimism.

Some of these outstanding personalities will share their personal experiences with us today, amongst them Władysław Bartoszewski from Poland who will deliver a key note address right after the opening remarks, and I am sure that all of us will be able to learn a lot from him. These outstanding personalities will discuss the issues involved with us and together with our neighbours we will try to shape the future based on the lessons learned from the past and the speeches held here today.

Quoting George Steiner, 1989 was indeed “the triumph of the unexpected” that was to change Europe fundamentally. Borders that had been considered insurmountable for so many decades were opened over night. Shackles had been shaken off. The Communist regime was history. I think we could also call it a triumph of freedom. The pictures we saw in the trailer show how much the people themselves, how much we all were moved by these events.

The difference between what was reality in Europe before 1989 and today’s reality is beyond comparison. In large parts of our continent people are free to travel wherever they like, border clearance and queues are a thing of the past. We’re free to travel on a wide variety of modes of transport across our continent.

Wherever the network has been expanded, rail travel is booming in our neighbouring countries. Cycle tourism is currently booming along the Danube and the Moldova and in many border regions. Any attempts at crossing the border before 1989 in, for instance, Freistadt in Upper Austria would in all probability have been a hopeless endeavour and doomed to fail.

In Central Europe, open borders are integral to our understanding of European cooperation today. Watchtowers and barbed wire fences are a thing of the past.

There are quite a number of memorials reminding us of the time. But many people in Austria also seem to believe that this peace project Europe is also a thing of the past. Past developments are taken for granted. I am convinced that this peace project will endure as something fundamental, uniting and sustainable between the peoples of Europe.

Although memories of the year 1989 may fade, or may be non-existent because many are too young to have witnessed them, the extraordinary events that marked that year remain firmly embedded in our collective memory, contributing to establishing and shaping the identity of this new Europe.

We laid down in our government programme that in 2009 – twenty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Federal Government will proactively share the events that marked the epochal year of 1989 and the end of the division of Europe, particularly with young people.
Why do we focus particularly on young people? All these events of 1989 had a lasting effect on Europe, having changed it for the better, turning people’s way of life – especially that of today’s youth – inside out and putting it on a new basis.

However, those who are too young to have experienced the time of the Iron Curtain are naturally not aware of all that. Therefore it must be the task of politics in Austria to raise the awareness of young people – and I am very pleased that many are here in the audience today – for these events and their implications; to help them see the benefits these developments have brought: the establishment of democracy in Europe, the associated strengths and the opportunities that were opened up.

We must continue to successfully tap this potential in order to shape the future in most diverse ways. By showing films, organising events, such as this Europe Congress, we want to raise awareness of the incredible importance the events of the time have on the life we are living today.

Over the next two days we will discuss the many different aspects of these changes, emphasising the triumph over division and the importance of a united Europe, ensuring they receive the attention they deserve. We will place an emphasis on the important role these convictions, ideas and achievements that contributed to overcoming the Cold War have played in shaping today’s Europe.

But our primary aim is to show to all how fundamentally the environment, our capacity to act and particularly the perspectives have changed in virtually every respect to the benefit of all – for both people and politics in Europe. With this event I wish to provide a sustainable impetus, to inspire you to contribute to shaping knowledge of the past, the present and the future with particular commitment.

I am calling on the young people who are here with us today in particular to join us in this endeavour.

These new perspectives that have opened up for them, for the societal, economic, political and cultural development of our continent have made a dream come true. The dream that a new dimension will be added to this Central Europe we all live in.

Doesn’t this sound paradoxical: Although the Member States of the European Union have not seen war for more than six decades thanks to their process of integration and the associated democratic development; and although the current economic crisis has also shown that our economic and financial situation is much stronger in a united Europe than if we were to stand alone – the level of scepticism towards the European Union is still high, and particularly so today.

I wanted to get a personal idea of the underlying reasons for this scepticism. On my Listening and Dialogue Tour I travelled through the federal provinces to get a clearer picture, identify and learn more about the root causes for this
scepticism. When talking to people I was frequently asked two questions – neither of which is easy to answer.

One was: “What is this European Union actually good for today?” And the other question was: “Is a small country like Austria actually able to assert itself in this large EU? Are we able to make a difference and to shape Europe?”

I believe that we have to be quite realistic. The European Union has 27 Member States and these Member States have a wide range of interests. There is a difference between living in the North of Europe or on the Mediterranean coast.

A new strategy has just been developed for the Nordic countries. The Baltic Sea region is shifting into the focus of attention. The EU’s Baltic and northern Member States joined forces to initiate a common future-oriented project in Europe. Only a few weeks ago we established the Eastern Partnership, which places a particular focus on six countries which do not belong to the European Union.

In my view, the only answer to the question on the deeper sense of this Union today – twenty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain – is: when it comes to facing the outside world Europe is strong when it is united.

Therefore it is necessary to continue convincing citizens that together the 27 Member States carry much more weight in the world than each of them alone, particularly in the current situation. This strength of the 27 is important whenever it becomes necessary for us to compete, to defend European interests in the world, to show the benefit of our European model of life, of our European values in comparison to others.

This strength we show towards the outside world may also find its expression in the courage to stand up for this European idea today in order to ensure that it will prevail in the future.

Concerning the question on how we can assert ourselves and whether we are able to make a difference, I would like to come back to what I mentioned briefly before. I believe that Central Europe, the countries that are represented here, must be confident and convinced that there is something that unites us within the framework of a larger Union, a link that is even closer than this common bond of Europe.

We are united by our shared history as neighbours, influenced by one another. We have a huge number of opportunities and yet untapped potential, something others do not have – and we need to make full use of the opportunities opening up for us.

Together with my Romanian counterpart Cristian Diaconescu we have launched a Danube initiative. Our neighbours are fully involved and they have all assured us of their full support for this initiative. As countries bor-
dering the River Danube, we have a wide range of opportunities for developing and implementing future-oriented projects.

This could also be an answer to the question on how we intend to contribute to shaping Central Europe also in the future as a group of countries within the large European Union that are united by an additional closer bond. This is an opportunity for also embedding a focus on Central Europe in the European Union.

I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank our friends within the Regional Partnership. We met only recently in Ljubljana under the Slovenian Presidency to deliberate on how to make this Partnership even closer.

Closer in the sense of also placing stronger emphasis on Central Europe.

Closer in the sense of coordinating our approaches on certain specific items on the European agenda, such as the Western Balkans for instance, since this is an area of common interest to all of us.

Closer also in the sense of intensifying mutual contact.

To this end, we have agreed to also meet at ambassadors’ level in Brussels in the future. At ministerial level we will meet in the lead-up to decisive EU Council meetings, particularly when common interests, such as the Western Balkans for instance, are concerned. Let me therefore take this opportunity to thank my colleagues from the neighbouring countries for breathing new life into this project, for opening up major opportunities for Central Europe also in the future.

I believe that this is an important lesson to learn from the pictures we saw earlier – that there is a stronger, closer future bond in Europe.

Before concluding, I would like to stress again how much I appreciate that you have come today, that you will give us food for thought. We will use this input in our talks and in the round table discussion to try and fill this perspective with concrete projects.

I am convinced that we will be able to learn a lot from this connection between the experiences of such outstanding contemporary witnesses like Władysław Bartoszewski and Jiří Dienstbier, who will share first-hand insights from the past, or Karel Schwarzenberg, who will deliver the keynote address this evening. Coupled with ideas for the future, these insights will surely enable us to draw sound conclusions.

I am very pleased that this project also focuses on the future, that we are taking the year 1989 as a basis for putting the overall future of Europe, Central Europe and Austria on the right track.

Thank you very much for your attention.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all here today at this event marking the completion of my EU Listening and Dialogue Tour. I am particularly pleased to be able to welcome Austria’s outstanding and highly respected former Foreign Minister Alois Mock in our midst today.

Dear Alois, I welcome you wholeheartedly. Furthermore, it is my pleasure to welcome former Federal Minister Willibald Pahr, and a warm word of welcome also goes to former Governor Siegfried Ludwig. Many of my friends are also here today, people I have come to know and to appreciate in the course of my political career.

You have all kindly joined me today to reflect a little on what we have achieved over these last few weeks. I have met many of you in the course of my EU Listening and Dialogue Tour and so many of you have supported and assisted me along the way.

Let me start by explaining what made me embark on this Listening Tour across Austria.

Well, I set out on this tour because I wanted to find out more about the often talked about EU scepticism. I wanted to gain a personal impression, listen to people and hear what they have to say and what they think – rather than getting it second-hand from those who claim to represent people’s views.

So I set out on my journey through the federal provinces. As you saw in the film, you pick up a wide range of impressions just by going to markets, listening to the people on the street, in coffee houses or army barracks or when you talk with students at universities or in schools.

People’s personal views vary according to their age, the population group they belong to and the federal province they live in. And the information that was shared with me has been very valuable, indeed. We have been to a hundred or so events and have met many people. We did some calculations and found out that we have succeeded in sharing at least one message with some 500,000 Austrians, namely that a Federal Minister for European Affairs is here to listen to their concerns. This is another reason why this tour has been so important to me and has made it so worthwhile.

I would like to share some answers with you today, some proposals I have prepared based not only on what I heard but also internalised on this tour. I have learned that our citizens’ view of the EU is not only black and white, but very colourful and indeed highly diversified.

Right at the beginning, after the first few events on this tour, I realised that the reason for scepticism is often based on the fact that many Austrians can
no longer see the bigger picture or have lost sight of the wider meaning of European integration. This is a very serious matter. If you are no longer aware of the underlying idea behind this Union of 27 members then you will also find it difficult to see the reason behind individual aspects of this bigger picture.

A lot has happened since the days when Alois Mock was in office. Back then he travelled the country to convince fellow Austrians ahead of the referendum that “Europe is a peace project”. And I am firmly convinced that this is what the European Union still is today. However, this fact somehow seems to have shifted out of the limelight a little and is no longer the focus of public attention.

The peace project is no longer the first thing that springs to people’s minds when they think of the EU because it’s something we have come to take for granted. Of course, today’s young people didn’t grow up with the Iron Curtain and it’s something they have only heard about from others.

But if you have no memory of watchtowers at the borders, of barbed wire fences and of people being persecuted, you will not know what to make of this “peace concept”. All this has led me to believe that we need to revise our definition of the underlying concept of the European Union. This is one of the lessons I have learned on this Listening Tour.

A second argument people shared with me over and over again was: “We Austrians are actually powerless. What kind of impact can we make? We have 18 members in the European Parliament, after the next election it will only be 17 – compared with a total of 700 MEPs. What difference will those few Austrians make in Brussels? What will they be able to accomplish there? Have we got any opportunity at all to have our say in the Council?” These are important questions we need to deal with. And there is no simple answer to all the issues that were put forward.

When we thought about how we, as Austrian citizens, can tell where Austrian interests are actually being strongly represented and asserted, we realised that things are not that simple.

There is actually a whole lot of information available about the EU. On the Internet, for instance, anyone who is interested can look up the decisions taken and can inform themselves in great detail about the content of these decisions and conclusions.

But when consulting all these documents it is not so easy to identify and track any underlying Austrian initiative or to see what position Austria held on an issue. This is another lesson I have learned on this tour which I would like to come back to a little later.

What I have also realised is that there is a wide range of very different regional issues and concerns on people’s minds.
In the Innsbruck market hall in Tyrol, for instance, ladies who were shopping told me about the issue of the Moroccans and no longer feeling safe in the city’s public parks because of them. The fear that these people may commit crimes and cannot be subsequently deported is very palpable.

In the Upper Austrian border district of Schärding I heard that freedom of services has not quite become reality yet. Entrepreneurs told me that although they are allowed to work across the border as carpenters or plumbers, for instance, this still means a lot of red tape.

In Lower Austria, my native province, people are particularly worried because of the economic crisis, asking me: “Where is the European initiative? What has the EU been doing about it? What action is being taken by the Commission, by the Parliament or by the Council?”

All this has convinced me that we are called upon to share much more information with a much larger number of citizens. In fact, so much has already been achieved in Europe, but too few people are aware of that. And this brings me to an essential issue.

It is clearly the information-sharing, transfer and dissemination processes that are not working as they should. In this context, I am, however, sure of one thing: we will not be able to improve these processes with advertising or awareness-raising campaigns alone, since Europe is not just a consumer product like washing powder you can sell.

There is much more to Europe than that – and fortunately so! However, this simple fact makes it all the more difficult to provide a tangible, practical understanding of Europe drawing on real-life examples. So in order to respond to all these questions, we are not planning to launch some poster campaign. Neither do we intend to run radio or TV adverts in our endeavour to convince Austrians that their scepticism is unjustified. Because this tour has shown one thing very clearly: citizens prefer a different approach when it comes to Europe.

This is the central lesson to be learned from the Listening and Dialogue Tour. Based on what I have heard and seen during my tour, I thus intend to present a number of proposals and initiatives at the extraordinary Ministerial Council meeting to be held by the Federal Government on 9 May.

The tour has clearly shown that the most important tool for countering EU scepticism is talking with people about Europe. In the course of these last few weeks, I have come to realise that this has actually been the most neglected aspect. We often talk at cross-purposes. Some talk in great detail about the Pesticide Directive while others have no idea on what to think about Europe as such at all. This is clearly not the appropriate basis for dialogue.

But then again, I can’t make people learn the Lisbon Treaty by heart. This would be totally counterproductive. And glossy brochures will not be of much help either in this context. What we need is a genuine process of dialogue – we need to simply meet and talk to people about Europe.
So I propose a dialogue on Europe that rests on the following three pillars:

**Institutionalisation:** We need to institutionalise the dialogue about Europe. And I am not referring to brochures now, but to the way in which we communicate and get in touch with citizens. How can we reach out to people? We have a number of excellent institutions in place, we just need to make sure that their activities are geared towards a larger target audience. To this end I would suggest breathing new life into the idea of using the European fora. Such fora have already been established in several federal provinces although not yet in others. But they could evolve into an important hub, an institutionalised forum for dealing with issues affecting the future of Europe.

Furthermore, I believe that we need to react to this demanding issue of information sharing by using modern means of communication. Every Federal Minister who travels to a Council meeting in Brussels has decisions to make. It is indeed this minister who introduces Austrian initiatives and who, as the competent head of the relevant ministry, will know best what is realistically achievable and whether Austria will vote in favour of or against initiatives introduced by other Member States. But who knows about all these things here in Austria? Far too few, I dare say.

By using modern means of communication, like videos or live-streams, for instance, we will be able to share with the public at large what they are really interested in, namely: what has Austria achieved and where did it not succeed? Did Austria vote in favour or against? This is the information we need to make available on this new platform, in a transparent and easily understandable manner.

I also believe that it should not only be the Minister for European Affairs who tours the provinces to meet and talk with people, but the Federal Government as a whole should embark on such encounters with our fellow citizens. I have experienced many positive moments, simply by being there. And I think that this would also be very beneficial for all of us in government.

**Regionalisation:** Secondly, it is necessary to regionalise this dialogue. Alongside dialogue at Federal Government and European fora level, we also need dialogue at regional level. So how can that work? Well, we have nine province parliaments in Austria, which all have a Committee for European Affairs. I have talked to some members of province parliaments in charge of European affairs – these “Province Parliament Delegates for EU Affairs”, if I may call them so – about my proposal and the feedback I have had has been very positive.

The idea is to turn these Province Parliament Committees for European Affairs into a genuine platform for dialogue. In this spirit, I propose inviting all the members and presidents of province parliaments to meet for dialogue with me once every six months to discuss and, so to speak, break down to province level all those things going on in Brussels and at European level that are of interest for the individual provinces.
In these half-yearly talks, we will also be able to learn first-hand from the province representatives what people in their regions actually think of Europe. By virtue of their job, members of province parliaments are in much closer contact with people than members of the National Council or a federal minister. I believe that this dialogue will be a very fruitful one.

I have also held very intensive talks with municipalities and representatives from the Association of Municipalities who were very open towards the idea of launching an initiative at community level. Municipalities have councillors for environmental affairs, or for youth affairs – to name but two, so why don’t we have councillors for European affairs? This means a member of the municipal council who specialises in everything related to the EU. Maybe this will help us make some headway.

So far we have been able to convince those responsible in municipal governments to make some space available for European issues in their publications and platforms. This is very positive – and something I am very grateful for, because I know that mayors and municipal councillors are the first contacts for citizens. Mayors will not have to answer detailed questions on the Pesticide Directive, for instance. It suffices for them to know who to turn to, where to forward a relevant request to or where and in how far they might have an opportunity to intervene and move things forward. And this will be the response citizens are looking for.

Focus: We also need a third pillar. Besides institutionalising and regionalising we also need to make this dialogue more specific and focused. The issues at stake are often very specific, regional concerns. When you have a special concern you wish to share with the authority, it is essential for you to know that someone will actually deal with this concern and follow up on it.

Often citizens don’t expect individual solutions for their individual problems – knowing that this would actually be illusionary. In this Europe of 500 million citizens it is simply not possible to achieve everything or to implement every idea. But if you focus the dialogue and discuss the topics that are specifically important for a certain group of the population – and believe me, the concerns raised by school pupils are rather different indeed from those voiced by senior citizens – then we will be able to inform people in a more target-group oriented manner about the EU.

Here too, I have prepared several proposals on how we believe this could work and I will be presenting these suggestions to the Council of Ministers.

I believe that these levels – institutionalisation, regionalisation and focus of dialogue on the EU – will create the appropriate framework for further progress. This dialogue is a process. On my tour I realised that we need to launch this process of dialogue and not allow it to lose momentum.

Because there is one thing we must avoid: EU scepticism can not be allowed to reach some kind of mythical status. It is no myth at all. It is an array of a
large number of small elements that, put together, will, by mutual escalation, build up this negative image.

But we are in a position to confront and counter such developments. By giving the right answers, by launching the appropriate initiatives to achieve something new.

However, much support is required in order to be able to launch such a process. And this is another reason why I am so pleased that you have all come here today. In our midst, I see motivated students from my former school in Keimgasse in Mödling – a warm welcome to you. Many members of parliament who have offered to support us in our endeavours have come today. Many friends, a lot of staff from my ministry who, in their daily work aim to raise awareness of the EU, have come along today. I am convinced that if we all join forces and each of us puts in just a little effort then we will be able to shift the EU’s image back towards where it actually belongs.

But I must not end this address without mentioning the many positive reactions people have shared with me – as you saw in the film earlier. Many people have come up to me on this tour and told me that they were very satisfied with the way things are going here in Austria.

This holds particularly true for those who travel a lot, who see what is going on in the world and appreciate what they have here in Austria. Austria is a great country with great people who are very innovative. We must not be talked into scepticism or allow it to grow. Because this scepticism actually poses a threat to us – if it is allowed to lead us astray from the path we have taken to becoming true Europeans and which has been so positive for us.

My goal is therefore to trigger a process of dialogue on Europe. And I want to launch this dialogue by introducing this catalogue of proposals at the extraordinary Council of Ministers meeting on Saturday.

In conclusion, I would like to thank you all again for having come here today and for supporting me so actively in this endeavour in the past. I look forward to your support in the future and thank you very much for your attention.
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