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## Austria and the OSCE<sup>1</sup>

### *Austria's Role and the N+N Group*

Austria has always had a decisive supportive role in the CSCE/OSCE, even during the preparations for the Helsinki Conference. It was on the basis of a proposal from the Austrian delegation in co-operation with other neutral and non-aligned states (N+N states) that at the last meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee, participants were able to come to an agreement. During the CSCE process, Austria - with the other N+N states (Sweden, Finland, Switzerland, Yugoslavia, Liechtenstein, Malta, Cyprus) in the so-called N+N group - was active primarily on issues like the political and military aspects of security. They were also interested in solutions to humanitarian problems, facilitating interactions between persons, comprehensive free circulation of information and co-operation in the areas of culture and education.<sup>2</sup> The N+N states were involved in negotiating and co-ordinating between the blocs particularly in the military area. They developed initiatives to solve unforeseen problems. In fact it was the neutral states who were responsible for drafting the concluding documents of follow-up meetings. Thus in the Madrid Follow-up Meeting (1980-1983), the N+N states were given a special role in continuing the dialogue, which had come to a halt because of the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. Finally, a third follow-up meeting in Vienna in 1986 and the Expert Meetings on Human Rights in Ottawa in 1985, on Human Contacts in Bern in 1986 as well as the Athens Meeting on Peaceful Settlement of Disputes in 1984 were arranged. The N+N states even drafted the final document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting.

At the 1990 Paris Summit, it was decided that a Conflict Prevention Centre (CPC) be established in Vienna (the Office for Free Elections also created at the Paris Summit was established in Warsaw). The CPC was to support the Ministerial Council (at that time the CSCE Council) in reducing the danger of conflicts. Its principle task was to aid in the implementation of confidence- and security-building measures (CSBM).<sup>3</sup> Finally the Secretariat established in 1991 in Prague was moved to Vienna in 1993.

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1 I would like to thank Kurt Tudyka for his comments and suggestions.

2 Cf. Sigrid Pöllinger, *Der KSZE/OSZE Prozess: Ein Abschnitt europäischer Friedensgeschichte* [The CSCE/OSCE Process: A Chapter in European Peace History], Vienna 1998, pp. 31, 92, 94.

3 Among other things, these include the mechanism for consultation and co-operation as regards unusual military activities. The Austrians and Italians launched the mechanism in 1991 in response to the Yugoslavia crisis. The reply from Yugoslavia, which they gave within the 48 hours allocated, did not yield very much new information. Austria then called to convene the Consultative Committee of the CPC. However this had no further influence on the course of the conflict.

### *New Instruments*

The OSCE Istanbul Document<sup>4</sup> identified the following new security risks: international terrorism, violent extremism, organized crime and drug trafficking. Furthermore the excessive and destabilizing accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons represent a threat to peace and security. The OSCE has emphasized their determination to strengthen protective measures against these new risks and challenges. The bases of this protection are the presence of strong democratic institutions and the rule of law. Thus security is to be ensured primarily through non-military means.

Austria derived the activities of its Chair during the year 2000 from the Istanbul Documents. In Istanbul, the Heads of State or Government of the OSCE participating States came to an agreement on the following measures:

- a) Single states and individual organizations are not able to meet the challenges and risks they are currently facing. Thus, first of all, co-operation between the OSCE and other international organizations and institutions is to be strengthened through the adoption of the Platform for Co-operative Security. Furthermore, closer co-operation between international organizations should bring about better utilization of the resources of the international community.
- b) The role of the OSCE in peacekeeping is to be extended thus better reflecting the Organization's comprehensive approach to security. The most effective OSCE contributions have been achieved in field operations, post-conflict rehabilitation, democratization, monitoring human rights and observing elections. Heads of State or Government have decided to examine the possibilities for a potentially larger and more comprehensive role for the OSCE in peacekeeping. The OSCE can, on a case-by-case basis and by consensus, decide to play a role in peacekeeping and it can take on a leading role when participating States judge it to be the most effective and appropriate organization for that purpose.
- c) Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams (REACT) are to be established and readily accessible to the OSCE at any given moment. They are designed to put the OSCE in the position to respond quickly to demands for assistance and for large civilian field operations and to deploy civilian and police expertise rapidly, which is considered essential for effective conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. REACT is based on an idea from the United States, which has considered the OSCE a civilian organization complementary to NATO since the mid-nineties.
- d) The capability to assume tasks in police-related activities is to be enhanced to be able to maintain the primacy of law. The role of the OSCE

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4 For the following cf. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Charter for European Security, Istanbul, November 1999, printed in this volume, pp. 425-443.

- in police-related activities (police monitoring, police training) as an integral part of the Organization's efforts in conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation is to be strengthened.
- e) If the OSCE is to be efficient in its efforts to achieve conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation the rapid deployment of personnel to field operations is important; this means detailed preparation and planning. To facilitate this process an Operation Centre within the Conflict Prevention Centre in the Vienna Secretariat will be established with a small core staff, having expertise relevant for all kinds of OSCE operations, which can be expanded rapidly when required. The Operation Centre will plan and deploy field operations, including those involving REACT resources. It will liaise with other international organizations and institutions as appropriate in accordance with the Platform for Co-operative Security.
  - f) The establishment of a Preparatory Committee under the OSCE Permanent Council will strengthen the consultation process within the OSCE. The Permanent Council, being the regular body for political consultations and decision-making, will address the full range of conceptual issues as well as the day-to-day operational work of the Organization. The Preparatory Committee is to assist in its deliberations and decision-making and to strengthen the process of political consultations and transparency within the Organization. This open-ended Committee will normally meet on an informal basis and will be tasked by the Council, or its Chairman, to deliberate and to report back to the Council.

#### *The Crisis Management Scale*

Crisis management and conflict prevention had priority for the Austrian Chair. What options does the OSCE have? One option would be to employ one or more of steps 1-6 on the following scale. These steps fit more in the category of "soft security". If military sanctions are necessary (7-9), other organizations (in co-operation with the OSCE) will have to become active.

1. *Early warning* is the relevant instrument for providing information on the dangerous escalation of a conflict to relevant institutions early enough so that they can react in a timely and effective manner.<sup>5</sup>
2. *Conflict prevention/resolution* includes all means of solving a conflict or at least hindering escalation in violence, which exclude the use of violence, e.g. preventive diplomacy and mediation.

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5 This definition fits in with the way "early warning" is used in several speeches - here on 24 May 1993 - by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoep.

3. *Peace-building* is to create conditions that make the use of violence unnecessary or hinder it. These measures can be used to prevent a violent conflict and/or implemented after it is over.
4. *Traditional peacekeeping* like the deployment of units carrying light arms as independent observers in a conflict zone is not designed to solve conflicts, but to reduce tensions and freeze conflicts. Peacekeeping is not expressly mentioned in the UN Charter, but is in principle based on Chapter VI because peacekeeping does not include coercive measures. The consent of all conflict parties is a prerequisite.
5. *Preventive deployment* means the deployment of troops before the outbreak of conflict (as was the case in Macedonia).
6. *Extended peacekeeping* includes new responsibilities of the peacekeepers as for example the collection of weapons, refugee return, election monitoring, police training and temporary administrative tasks.
7. *Robust/strategic peacekeeping* was supposed to blur the lines between peacekeeping and peace enforcement. Peacekeeping troops were to fulfil both these tasks, that is to say they were also to use arms. The failure of the operation in Somalia and the limitations on the UNPROFOR in Bosnia have shown that such efforts have been fruitless.
8. *Peace implementation* serves post-conflict peace-building. It includes all measures (even military) that support security. There are three main groups categorized under military security: demilitarization, military reform, arms control and regional stability. All three groups are designed to contribute to confidence-building and increased transparency. The implementation of the Dayton peace agreement in Bosnia can be described as peace implementation.
9. *Peace enforcement* is the use of force against a conflict party on the basis of a clear mandate. It is usually carried out on the basis of Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Despite this, impartiality should be guaranteed. The USA and NATO emphasized during the Kosovo crisis in June 1998 that if Russia made use of its veto power, a military intervention could occur without a resolution from the Security Council.
10. *Collective defence*: The member states of an alliance have committed themselves to come to the aid (including the use of military means) of a member (or several members) individually or as a group against the threat of an attack or an attack from outside the alliance (commitment to mutual assistance). In the case of war there are clearly defined enemies.

#### *The Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union*

The EU has the economic resources, the political power and moreover a broad repertoire of measures to implement preventive diplomacy to be able to promote democracy, the observance of human rights and economic develop-

ment. It has the potential to become one of the leading forces in conflict prevention in Europe. The establishment of a EU Policy Planning and Early Warning Unit has given new direction to the process. Since the Amsterdam Treaty was signed in June 1997, the European Union (EU) has been advancing in all areas of crisis management. The Amsterdam Treaty provides that the EU can take advantage of the WEU to develop and implement EU actions to fulfil humanitarian tasks, rescue missions and peacekeeping tasks as well as deploy combat forces in crisis management (*Petersberg Tasks*). The European Council emphasized in Cologne<sup>6</sup> in June 1999 that the goals of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the step-by-step establishment of a common defence policy were to make it possible to take decisions on the full range of conflict-prevention and crisis-management tasks. In Helsinki (10-11 December 1999) the Council decided to implement EU-led operations to react to international crises.<sup>7</sup> At the latest by the year 2003, member states were to be prepared to make armed forces available within a period of 60 days. These were to be composed of one corps (approximately 15 brigades, 50-60,000 soldiers - the total force could number approximately 200,000 including replacement forces) who could be deployed for at least a year. A standing Political and Security Committee (PSC) in Brussels made up of national senior officials and ambassadors is to deal with all aspects of CFSP and exercise the political control as well as the strategic direction of operations. A Military Committee made up of chiefs of staff represented by their military delegates is to be assembled. They would advise the PSC on military matters and establish the guidelines for the Military Staff. The Military Staff is to deal with early warning, evaluation of specific situations and strategic planning in view of carrying out the *Petersberg Tasks*.

The contents of a report also adopted in Helsinki include an Action Plan, which, among other things, is to improve the synergy and responsiveness in the implementation of existing EU instruments. A co-ordination mechanism for non-military crisis management was created.<sup>8</sup> Under the Portuguese Presidency a Committee for Civilian Crisis Management was created parallel to the Committee for Military Crisis Management; it was to be in full operation by the end of the year 2000. Concrete goals are to be identified on the collective non-military reaction capability of EU member states to international crises (the EU summit in Feira in June 2000 determined as a final objective that EU member states should by 2003 be able to provide up to 5,000 civilian police officers for international missions; they also should be able to identify and deploy, within 30 days, up to 1,000 police officers in a

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6 Cf. Declaration of the European Council on Strengthening the Common European Policy on Security and Defence, 3 June 1999.

7 Cf. The Finnish Presidency, Presidency Report to the Helsinki European Council, Strengthening of the Common European Policy on Security and Defence: Crisis Management, Helsinki, 11-12 December 1999.

8 In the conclusions of the report, the examination of whether a committee for civilian crisis management should be created was transferred to the Portuguese Presidency.

crisis area; combined search and rescue services with up to 200 persons should be operational within 24 hours).

The Cologne declaration as well as the Helsinki and the Feira declarations made clear that European Security and Defence Policy was not collective defence. NATO will remain the base of the collective defence of its members.<sup>9</sup> However, Helsinki achieved the launching of a process, which makes it possible to take on the whole range of conflict prevention and crisis management tasks.

Moreover aside from autonomous actions by the EU, the Action Plan calls for contributions to the work of other organizations like the United Nations and the OSCE. In addition, the activities within this framework are to be strengthened when one of these organizations takes on the leading role in a particular crisis.

Thus the EU would like to cover all areas of the scale and since Helsinki they have also adopted areas 1-3, which could mean overlaps with OSCE tasks (particularly b, c, d). The Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams of the OSCE and the Committee for Civilian Crisis Management of the EU have similar tasks and pursue similar goals. However, although both organizations have emphasized that they would like to co-operate, they have yet to tackle problems in areas 1-6.

Especially when it comes to the deployment of civilian police forces, there will be numerous problems to solve. For example the United Nations and NATO announced after the bombings had been stopped that they would send 4,700 civilian police to Kosovo. However, nine months later there were only 2,300 police there. UNMIK (United Nations Mission in Kosovo) never has more than 300 policemen on active duty.

#### *Austrian Participation in OSCE Missions*

From the very beginning Austria has contributed personnel as well as financial support to OSCE field operations.

Since the first OSCE mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Kosovo, Sandjak and Vojvodina) was deployed in 1992, this area of activities of the Organization has gained importance steadily. This was illustrated by the establishment of the Kosovo Verification Mission at the end of 1998, which was replaced by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo in 1999.

During the year 2000 there were more than 20 OSCE field operations with a total of approximately 3,000 members (1,300 international mission members and 1,700 local employees). The mandates, which have been decided upon through the consensus of all OSCE participating States, task these with

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9 Javier Solana, High Representative of the EU for Common Foreign and Security Policy, The Development of a Common European Security and Defence Policy - The Integration Project of the Next Decade, Berlin, 17 December 1999.

monitoring the situation, supporting the appropriate authorities as well as institutions of civil society, promoting dialogue and reconciliation between potential conflict parties (e.g. ethnic groups) and submitting reports on their findings to the Permanent Council and the Chairman-in Office. 85 per cent of the OSCE budget is used for field operations.<sup>10</sup> There are 1,400 people employed in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo (700 of these are international staff). Of the OSCE budget for the year 2000 totalling 191,026,600 Euro, 88,273,200 Euro have been allocated to Kosovo.<sup>11</sup>

Up to now Austria has provided Heads for three OSCE field operations: Ambassador Herbert Grubmayr as Head of Mission in Estonia from 1995 to 1996 and Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania in 1997, Ambassador Paul Ullmann as Head of the OSCE Centre in Ashgabad/Turkmenistan until 31 December 1999. Currently 30 Austrian members are located at nine different missions. Austria made contributions of 6.45 million Schillings (468,739 Euro) in 1998 and 9.77 million Schillings (710,013 Euro) in 1999 to take part in missions.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Austrian Chair*

Austria held the OSCE Chair for the year 2000. The foreign minister of the country chairing the OSCE is - as its Chairman-in-Office - its spokesman and representative. He exercises a central control function for the Organization. He has the authority to appoint certain positions (OSCE Heads of Mission, Personal Representatives for different crisis and conflict regions). In his work, the Chairman-in-Office is given support by the Secretary General of the OSCE as well as the Secretariat located in Vienna. Personal Representatives and the OSCE missions in the various conflict regions also back him up. The success of the Chair is dependent on efficient co-operation with other OSCE institutions like the Parliamentary Assembly, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the Representative on Freedom of the Media and the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities.

At the beginning of its Chairmanship, Austria had extensive plans:

The Austrian Chair intended to focus on crises and conflicts in the OSCE area. This means strengthening OSCE capacities as a field organization particularly in the areas of conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. An important step in this direction was the implementation by the Austrian Chair of the REACT concept, which was adopted at the OSCE Summit in Istanbul. This means the creation of civilian, well-trained

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10 Cf. Hans van Santen, *The Istanbul Summit - A moderate success*, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 1/2000, pp. 8-10, here: p. 9.

11 Cf. Vahram Abadjian, *OSCE long-term missions: Exit strategy and related problems*, in: *Helsinki Monitor* 1/2000, pp. 22-36, here: p. 33.

12 Information Jürgen Strasser, OSCE Department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

stand-by contingents (e.g. for election monitoring, democratization, police) in OSCE participating States, which can be deployed quickly in a crisis situation. There are a total of about 250 people employed in the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna and in mission headquarters. The number of employees in the OSCE department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry has been doubled to a total of 24. The budget for the year 2000 totalled about 180 million Schillings (13 million Euro).<sup>13</sup>

*A Primary Focus: South-Eastern Europe*<sup>14</sup>

With the adoption of the Dayton Peace Agreement for *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (1995), the OSCE was given a major role in the Balkans for the first time. At that time, they were not only tasked with organizing elections. Under their auspices, agreements for the whole region were and are still being negotiated in the area of disarmament and confidence-building measures.

There have been immense challenges for the OSCE Mission in *Kosovo*, which is currently the largest OSCE field operation. In 2000, the Mission organized elections which stabilized the fragile political landscape in *Kosovo*. The OSCE also does its best in co-operation with the United Nations to set up an administration, build a functioning judicial system and ensure free media. The Austrian Chair is also especially interested in safeguarding the multi-ethnicity of *Kosovo*. Police trained by the OSCE are currently the only multi-ethnic institutional group in the region.

The most outstanding event during the Austrian Chairmanship was the return of the *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY)* into the OSCE. The FRY had been suspended from participating in the OSCE since 1992. The Austrian OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Foreign Minister Benita Ferrero-Waldner, considered the readmittance of the FRY as a means to represent all states of Europe in the OSCE and as a start of a new more peaceful era in South-eastern Europe.

Major positive developments have taken place in *Croatia* after free and fair elections in early 2000. The Croatian government has achieved considerable progress in fulfilling its international commitments. They will be decisive for the OSCE's future activities in the country.

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13 Information Jürgen Strasser, OSCE Department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry.

14 On the following cf. [www.osce.presidency.gv.at](http://www.osce.presidency.gv.at).



Austrian Participation in OSCE Field Operations<sup>15</sup>  
 (Status as of 1 September 2000)

OSCE Mission	Date the mandate was issued	Number of international personnel according to mandate	Number of Austrian staff members
Spillover Monitor Mission to Skopje	6/11/1992	8	-
Mission to Georgia	29/3/1994	19	3
Mission to Estonia	3/2/1993	6	-
OSCE Representative to the Estonian Government Commission on Military Pensioners	4/11/1994		-
Mission in Kosovo	1/7/1999	700	18
Mission to Moldova	11/3/1993	8	-
Mission to Latvia	7/10/1993	7	-
Mission to Tajikistan	1/12/1993	11	1
Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine	1/6/1999	3	1
Assistance Group to Chechnya	11/4/1995	12	1
Personal Representative of the CiO on the Conflict Dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference	10/8/1995 <sup>16</sup>	6 <sup>17</sup>	1
Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina	8/12/1995	208	11
Mission to Croatia	18/4/1996	251	2
Presence in Albania	27/3/1997	43	2
Advisory and Monitoring Group in Belarus	18/9/1997	5	-
Centre in Almaty	23/7/1998	4	1
Centre in Ashgabad	23/7/1998	4	-
Centre in Bishkek	23/7/1998	4	-
OSZE Secretariat Central Asian Liaison Office (Tashkent)	16/3/1995	4	-
Office in Yerevan	22/7/1999	6	-
Office in Baku	16/11/1999	6	1

15 Cf. [www.osce.presidency.gv.at](http://www.osce.presidency.gv.at).

16 Not a mandate in the real sense of the word, but an authorization by the Chairman-in-Office.

17 Personal Representative and five field assistants.

In *Bosnia and Herzegovina* elections were also on the agenda. Their organization and implementation will be an important OSCE task: municipal elections took place in April 2000, parliamentary elections were held in the autumn of 2000. The new Electoral Law is to be applied for the first time in the parliamentary elections. The successful implementation of the Electoral Law is of utmost importance to the democratic developments of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The OSCE is giving support to the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch in his efforts to transfer more responsibility to elected representatives so that they will be able to construct a functioning community.

### *The Caucasus*

*Chechnya:* The OSCE has been playing an important political and humanitarian role in the Northern Caucasus through its Assistance Group to Chechnya. The OSCE was the only international organization that was represented just before the renewed outbreak of fighting in Chechnya. Since the temporary transfer of the Mission to Moscow, the Russian Federation has refused to allow the OSCE to play any part in this conflict. Without a doubt, the turn of events in Chechnya have meant defeat for the OSCE up to this point. During the war the OSCE tried to bring attention with little success to the disproportional use of military means in combating terrorists and that primarily the civilian population were enduring bitter sufferance. At the beginning of March 2000 Russia agreed to accept human rights observers in Chechnya including the Austrian Special Representative for Chechnya and Head of the Assistance Group to Chechnya, Ambassador Alfred Missonig. However the trip had to be postponed because of continued fighting. Nevertheless, the Austrian Special Representative for Chechnya was able to visit the war zone twice at the end of March 2000. During Ms. Ferrero-Waldner's trip to Moscow in April 2000 she met the Russian President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. Despite security risks she insisted also on going to Chechnya. Russia agreed to reopen a permanent OSCE representation in Chechnya. Before the Assistance Group could return this representation would have to be limited to a "Bureau" that would co-ordinate humanitarian aid. The Austrian Chairperson-in-Office considered this a huge success. However the Assistance Group had still not been able to return to Chechnya by the end of the Austrian Chairmanship. The issue of the reactivation of the OSCE role in Chechnya and the return of the Assistance Group to the region has been a matter of prime concern to the Austrian Chair. Thus Austria considers it all the more regrettable that the OSCE has not yet managed to get the Assistance Group back in operation there, especially in view of the humanitarian situation.<sup>18</sup>

*Georgia:* Developments in Northern and Southern Caucasia are tightly intertwined. Thus OSCE participating States reacted positively when Georgia

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18 In the meantime an office has been rented, but up to now not occupied. Officially this is due to security reasons.

requested an OSCE border monitoring mission along the 80 kilometre-long Georgian-Chechen border. Since the beginning of this OSCE Mission in December 1999, no border incidents have been registered. The OSCE border-monitoring operation on the frontier between Georgia and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation has led to a significant contribution in reducing tensions and is a good example of the OSCE's conflict-prevention capabilities during the Austrian Chairmanship. The (unarmed) monitoring mission - with an Austrian commander - has been increased from the original 15 to 42 members. However, complete monitoring of the border would necessitate a staff of 1,500. The conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia are so-called frozen conflicts. The OSCE has been tasked with promoting the return of refugees.

The peace process in *Nagorno-Karabakh* has been one of the focal points of the Austrian Chair. Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, declared its independence in 1988. This led to bloody fighting and the displacement of a million people. In 1994 a cease-fire was negotiated. The so-called OSCE Minsk Group<sup>19</sup> however has been trying to reach a political solution to this conflict for many years. A series of direct talks between the Armenian and Azerbaijani Presidents started in 2000 have opened up new perspectives for peace. The fact that leading Armenian politicians were murdered in October 1999 may mean that it will take awhile for the country to achieve political stability. Nevertheless, there have been positive signals. Austria gave full support to the Minsk Group. If a peace agreement is achieved, the OSCE will play an important role in its implementation (perhaps in the form of the first OSCE peacekeeping operation or a monitoring mission). However, there was a lack of tangible political progress during the Austrian Chairmanship.

#### *A Strategy for Central Asia*

The Austrian Chair has also made an effort to integrate the Central Asian States, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, more strongly into OSCE structures. It developed a regional action-oriented strategy further, which not only takes into account the requirements of these five countries but also the limitations of OSCE financial and personnel capacities. A stronger OSCE commitment to economic and ecological issues, especially through the support of other international organizations, is designed to show the Central Asian countries that the OSCE, as a comprehensive security organization, does not view respect for human rights as an isolated event, but as a component of a comprehensive security concept, which includes the human and economic dimensions as well as the politico-military dimension.

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19 Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Germany, Finland, Italy, Norway, Austria, Sweden and Turkey. USA, Russia and France hold the common co-chairmanship.

### *Other Focal Points*

Parliamentary elections took place in the autumn of 2000 in *Belarus*.

The Austrian Chair was involved in a number of election observation activities in a series of OSCE participating States. During the year 2000 a total of 18 elections took place, including those in Kosovo, Croatia, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan.

In the OSCE human dimension area, the Austrian Chair dealt with such topics as "preventing torture", "children in armed conflicts", "internally displaced persons" and "trafficking in human beings".

### *The New Government*

Although the coalition programme of the Austrian People's Party (APP/ÖVP) and the Austrian Freedom Party (AFP/FPÖ) in February 2000 emphasized that along with military crisis management there was also a necessity for civilian conflict prevention and the non-military aspects of crisis management, they have placed a different security policy initiative at the heart of their programme. In point 3 in the chapter on security of their programme they affirmed:

"The Federal Government will endeavour to ensure (...) that a guarantee of mutual assistance between the EU countries become part of the EU body of law and will apply also to Austria."<sup>20</sup>

Therefore the federal government will target a large percentage of their energies on point ten of the aforementioned scale. However these efforts will be a waste because the EU does not show any inclination to sign a mutual assistance guarantee for collective defence. The initiative has its basis in more domestic concerns: It is a way of unobtrusively revoking Austrian neutrality, which is incompatible with collective defence.

In the chapter on security, the OSCE is mentioned for the first time in point 8 in connection with an amendment to a law. The federal government

"will ensure that, in addition to already existing UN peace operations, Austria can take part in all peace operations that are supported by the OSCE or within the CFSP framework by rendering contributions of its own or by facilitating the operations of other participating states. Moreover, Austria will be enabled to support peace operations of other international organizations that are carried out without a pertinent UN Security Council resolution but in compliance with the principles of the UN

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20 This quotation and those following are cited from: [www.Austria.gv.at/e](http://www.Austria.gv.at/e).

Charter in order to prevent humanitarian disasters or to put an end to severe and systematic human rights violations."

Austria's participation in peace operations within the framework of the OSCE or CFSP has been approved. However, in contrast to the attitudes of the previous government, a mandate by the UN Security Council is no longer considered necessary by the present government.

In the chapter on foreign and European policy in point 6, "United Nations and multilateral questions", it is stated:

"During the Austrian presidency of the OSCE, the Federal Government will make strenuous efforts to utilise to the full the potential of this important regional organisation for conflict prevention, crisis management and post-crisis assistance."

However, the real focus of the Austrian federal government is clarified in the chapter on the "Austrian Armed Forces" (AAF):

"The AAF must be prepared for all the above missions, including the whole spectrum of European crisis management, (Petersberg Missions), and for tasks with respect to stabilisation and European solidarity."

This means points 1-10 on the scale. This project is doomed to failure for a defence budget that is 0.9 per cent of the GDP.

Because the Freedom Party, internationally categorized as belonging to the extreme right, became a part of the Austrian government, the 14 EU partners decided to boycott Austria bilaterally. Moreover the coalition had effects on the climate at a multi-lateral level. The inaugural address of the Austrian Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner (APP) to the OSCE Permanent Council on 10 February, where she emphasized Austria's plans to make full use of the capacity of the Chair to manage the Organization, was shadowed by a boycott on the part of Belgium, France and Andorra. In certain respects, the position of the Austrian Chair had been weakened. Austria is now faced with far greater difficulties in presenting itself as a moral example (e.g. in the areas of legislation and minorities). In isolated instances Austria had even been encouraged to relinquish the Chair or at least keep its activities at a low flame. The meeting of the Minsk Group was not held in Vienna. The anniversary event commemorating the "25th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act" planned for June was cancelled and replaced with a series of workshops. A group of dissidents from the former Eastern bloc states and representatives of human rights organizations had been invited to attend. However, big names like Vaclav Havel, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing or Helmut Schmidt were absent. The former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner presided over the opening

ceremony. Whether the meeting of the Ministerial Council scheduled for November would take place had long been uncertain.<sup>21</sup>

### *Prospects for the Future*

The participation in international peacekeeping operations within the framework of the UN or the OSCE should remain an Austrian priority (points 4, 5, 6 on the scale). It will not have been the first time Austria has shown its solidarity through international peacekeeping operations. Since 1960 Austria has deployed around 40,000 people (soldiers, police, civilian experts) in more than 30 international operations. They spend almost a billion Schillings of their budget on these operations every year. Up to now this has come to a total of about eight billion Schillings. Currently Austria is represented in eleven different missions with a total of 1,000 employees. This is an overly proportional contribution to international peacekeeping if one takes the size of the Austrian population into consideration. However the new government want to institute budget cuts particularly for the UN missions which have been so successful for Austria. For example Austria will withdraw from the UN Mission to Cyprus.

Austria should concentrate primarily on instruments of *soft security*, such as peacekeeping and humanitarian tasks. Austria is not under threat and does not need rigid mechanised military combat units. It would make sense to have flexible troop divisions, e.g. for command and maintenance units, sapper and engineering units, demining units, medical corps units, troops responsible for logistics, search and rescue units etc. Each individual situation can be examined to determine whether participation in peacemaking operations is legiti-

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21 The Austrian Foreign Minister and OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, admitted before the Austrian press in November 2000: "At the beginning we were working against a headwind." The Ministerial Council took place in Vienna on 27-28 November 2000. However, due to the conflicts in Chechnya, Georgia and Trans-Dniestria the meeting of the foreign ministers of the OSCE participating States ended with no consensus on a ministerial declaration encompassing the whole range of issues of concern to the OSCE. The foreign ministers and representatives of the 55 participating States were able to adopt the Vienna Declaration on the role of the OSCE in South-eastern Europe and a decision on enhancing the OSCE's efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. The Forum for Security Co-operation approved a far-reaching agreement to combat the spread of small arms and light weapons, which sets valid norms and concrete measures for monitoring the spread of weapons in the OSCE region. No agreement could be reached on a document affirming support for the rights of children in areas of armed conflict. The achievements of the Austrian Chairmanship are mixed. There was no spectacular success, except the return of FRY to the OSCE which was not so much due to the efforts of the Chair. But there was some solid progress in the field of conflict prevention and successful and well-organized elections on the Balkans. The Austrian Delegation and its Head, Jutta Stefan-Bastl, have worked hard openly as well as taking action behind the scenes to bring the Organization forward several steps.

The Ministerial Council may be symbolic for the prospects of the OSCE. Both the United States and Russia demonstrated considerable interest in the Organization. Russia took a tougher stance to make its interests clear, however. During the Romanian Chairmanship we will see whether this will have led to a stalemate or to more co-operation.

mate (points 7 and 8 on the scale). However, this instrument should be used in a restrained manner. Austria should take part in the so-called *Petersberg Tasks* within the framework of the EU. It would then enjoy the same rights in the planning and the passing of resolutions on these actions as an EU member.