

The European Union — a strong and reliable international partner

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs in the Austrian Presidency

Presidency of the Council of the European Union

- Chairmanship of six meetings of the EU foreign ministers (General Affairs and External Relations Council). Ongoing coordination of the EU position on current foreign policy issues such as Iran, the Middle East, Belarus and the Western Balkans. Questions of principle also dealt with such as enlargement and the constitutional process.
- Chairmanship of two informal meetings of foreign ministers: Salzburg on 10-11.3.2006 (focus: the Western Balkans) and Klosterneuburg on 27-28.5.2006 (focus: debate on the future and enlargement).

Chairmanship at EU meetings with other states at ministerial level

- Sixteen meetings of the EU Foreign Ministers Troika (Presidency, Incoming Finnish Presidency, High Representative Solana, the Commissioner responsible) concerning the political dialogue with Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, China, Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Afghanistan, Indonesia, the South Caucasian States, New Zealand, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
- Eleven meetings of foreign ministers in the framework of Association or Cooperation Councils with neighbouring states and regions: Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Turkey, Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Israel, Moldova, the Gulf Cooperation

Council and the EEA states. Issues: contractual relations of the EU with these states or groups of states concerning, for example, the economic sphere.

- EU-US Summit. Involvement in and preparation of the summit and the meeting documents.
- Two accession conferences at foreign minister level: Croatia and Turkey. In both cases commencement and provisional conclusion of an initial negotiating chapter, Science and Research.
- One Council of Ministers of the EU and the states of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) in Papua New Guinea: Adoption of the 7th European Development Fund for the ACP states.

Close collaboration with the European Parliament and the European Commission

- Eleven Plenary Debates by the European Parliament with the participation of the Federal Minister or Secretary of State. (In total, 60 Plenary Debates with members of the Austrian Government.)
- Ten committee debates of the European Parliament with the participation of the Federal Minister or Secretary of State. (In total, 40 with members of the Austrian Government.)
- Close, continuous coordination and cooperation with the Commission, in particular with the members Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Olli Rehn, Louis Michel and Peter Mandelson, who are responsible for foreign policy issues.

Representation of the EU in international forums at ministerial level

- Meeting of the G8 foreign ministers in Moscow: coordination on important foreign policy issues ranging from Iran and the Middle East to Afghanistan and Africa and preparation of the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg.
- Meetings of the Middle East Quartet (EU, USA, UN, Russia) in London and New York as well as regular telephone conferences: coordination of the position on Hamas after its electoral victory and the formation of a government, and on re-viving the Middle East peace process.
- Meeting of the Balkans contact group in London: establishing the framework and support for ongoing negotiations on the future status of Kosovo.
- International Afghanistan conference: agreement on the Afghanistan Compact, a joint working programme for the country's development.

Chairmanship of EU committees at civil servant level

- Employees of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs (BmaA) chair 60 meetings of the Permanent Representatives Committee (of EU ambassadors from the 25 Member States and their deputies) in Brussels. Preparation of all ministerial conferences of the EU.
- Employees of the BMaA chair over 1,400 meetings of expert groups of the Council of the EU (Council working groups) in Brussels.
- Austrian ambassadors lead the meetings of the EU Heads of Mission (ambassadors) in a total of 67 states. Coordination of reports and demarches.

Global commitment to human rights

- Intervention on behalf of individuals under threat: Over 25 interventions for threatened human rights defenders; releases achieved in Nepal, Cambodia and Uzbekistan. Meetings with human rights defenders in 50 countries.
- Over 30 demarches concerning the death penalty in more than 15 countries. Also numerous interventions and public statements.
- Demarches in over 40 countries with the aim of improved cooperation with UN special rapporteurs and of compliance with international reporting obligations under the UN Convention against Torture.
- Adoption of an EU strategy for improved protection of children during armed conflicts.

Intensive contacts with all partners

- During the Austrian Presidency over 1,000 foreign policy analyses and reports ("Coreus") were sent to the other EU Member States for rapid coordination of the response to international issues. Issues ranged from Myanmar and the Middle East to Sudan.
- During the Austrian Presidency almost 11,000 official documents of the Council of the EU. Also numerous informal working papers, reports and compromise proposals.
- 121 Presidency declarations on behalf of the EU concerning current foreign policy events.