

NATIONAL REPORT AUSTRIA

*by David Rezac, University of Vienna**

1. Basic views of CFSP/ESDP in your country. What are the priorities for your government in CFSP? What are the key issues for your country?

According to the Austrian Security and Defence Doctrine¹, Austria's foreign and security policy (in the context of CFSP/ESDP) should be shaped in accordance with the following principles:

- Working effectively for Austria's interests at the bilateral and multilateral level as well as within the framework of the EU.
- Support of EU reforms, especially with a view to developing the CFSP/ESDP and safeguarding the Union's security policy interests.
- Continuous co-ordination with Austria's EU partners as the best way to promote Austrian national interests within the EU. Development of a partnership with like-minded states holding similar views which are linked by common regional interests (Regional Partnership Concept).
- Active participation in the ESDP in the spirit of solidarity; since ESDP is currently pursuing the aim of giving the EU the necessary means and capabilities as well as efficient decision-making structures for civil and military crisis management. Austria will make an appropriate contribution in terms of quantity as well as quality to the headline goals and capability goals of the EU.
- Priority support to any future efforts to realise the possibility of a common European defence envisaged in Article 17 of the EU treaty.
- Consistent further development of Austria's relations with NATO within the framework of the tailored co-operation programme. Full usage of the possibilities for co-operation and dialogue offered within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. Close co-operation between the EU and NATO in the spirit of a strategic partnership is regarded as a prerequisite for the success of the ESDP.
- NATO's enlargement process is welcomed as a contribution to the strengthening of security and stability in Europe and is thereby also in Austria's interest. In light of the development within the field of security policy, Austria will continuously assess the value of NATO membership for its security and defence policy and the option of

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¹ The Austrian Security and Defence Doctrine was adopted by the Austrian Parliament in December 2001. It was supported by the political parties forming Austria's present government, the OeVP (Austrian People's Party) and the FPÖ (Freedom Party). It was rejected by the opposition, the Social Democrats (SPÖ) and the Green Party.

joining NATO will be kept open. Accession to NATO would only take place after prior consent of the Austrian people.

2. National Perceptions and Positions with regard to CFSP/ESDP issues

As mentioned above, Austria is in favour of strengthening CFSP as well as ESDP, and considers active participation in ESDP in a spirit of solidarity a priority. In order to avoid divisions within the EU such as during the Iraq crisis Austria would be in favour of the introduction of the community method into CFSP. At least qualified majority voting should be extended in the field of CFSP.

- **The position of your country towards NATO:**

Today, NATO constitutes not just a classical military alliance but a comprehensive security community which is based on democratic values and which renders a crucial contribution to peace and security world-wide through its stability-oriented policies. Austria advocates close and trustful co-operation between EU and NATO. Europe's security primarily depends on the effective functioning of the EU and of NATO. As mentioned above, close co-operation between the EU and NATO in the spirit of a strategic partnership is regarded as a prerequisite for the success of the ESDP. In a framework document signed in February 1995, Austria has expressed its intention to work for the achievement of the aims underlying the Partnership for Peace. From 1995 to 2001, Austria took part in the NATO-led multinational peace operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina (IFOR/SFOR) as a PfP partner. Since the autumn of 1999, Austria has been participating in the Kosovo operation (KFOR). Since 1997, the framework of "enhanced PfP" has made provision for all partners to achieve interoperability for the whole spectrum of peace support operations – i.e., including peace enforcement through combat missions. Austria is also actively involved in the work of the European Partnership Council (EAPC), PfP's political consultation forum.

- **The role of the EU in crisis management:**

Austria considers it very important that the EU is in a position to carry out civilian and military crisis management operations. Therefore Austria welcomes the conclusion of the so called Berlin Plus Agreements between the EU and NATO earlier this year which considerably buttressed the strategic partnership between the two organisations in the field of crisis management. It is furthermore of utmost importance that the Member States improve their military and civilian capabilities to carry out crisis management. Austria is trying to make an appropriate contribution to the capabilities goals of the EU and is participating with personnel in all three EU crisis management operations (EUPM in Bosnia and Herzegovina, CONCORDIA in FYROM and ARTEMIS in Congo).

- **The perceived impact of EU enlargement on CFSP/ESDP:**

Fearing that it will be even more difficult to reach consensus in the field of CFSP after enlargement Austria favours an extension of qualified majority voting.

3. European Convention: Reform of EU External relations, CFSP/ESDP

- **External Representation**

Austria supports the creation of a strong Union Minister for Foreign Affairs, who is responsible to the Council and at the same time Vicepresident of the Commission (“double hatting” solution). Austria would have favoured the maintenance of the rotation in the European Council but can accept a permanent Chairman of the European Council who is not allowed to hold any other office and represents the Union only at the level of heads of States and governments. However, in the intergovernmental conference Austria will try to introduce a further paragraph into the constitutional treaty which ensures that there is no “cohabitation” between the EU Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the European Council.

- **Decision-making:**

Austria is disappointed that the European Convention did not recommend more majority voting in its draft for a constitutional treaty. Austria however welcomes the forms of flexibility recommended by the European Convention in the field of ESDP. They should make further progress possible even in a EU of 25.

- **Crisis management:**

Austria supports the new definition of the scope of Petersberg tasks in Article III-210 of the draft constitutional treaty. Austria rejects Article III-211 (“the Council of Ministers may entrust the implementation of a task to a group of Member States having the necessary capability and the desire to undertake the task”) because of its paragraph 2 which restricts the responsibility of the Council and of the Political and Security Committee (PSC).

- **Defence:**

- Solidarity clause: Austria supports the provisions (Article I-42) on the solidarity clause. Austria especially welcomes that the solidarity clause’s scope of application also comprises natural and man-made disasters.
- Armaments Agency: Austria is in favour of the establishment of a European Armaments, Research and Military Capabilities Agency, as foreseen in Article III-212. However, Austria is of the view, that all participating Member States, as is the case in other Agencies of the Community, should have the same rights and liabilities.
- Austria furthermore supports the proposed closer cooperation of a group of Member States in the field of mutual defence since this would be an important step towards a European Common Defence.

The Proposals of Four (Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg – “Mini Summit”): Austria’s reaction to the declaration issued by Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg after their “mini-summit” on 29 April was cautious. Although Austria supports most of the proposals of the four Member States – most of them are actually included in the draft for a constitutional treaty – it would consider their implementation outside the constitutional framework of the EU detrimental to the European integration process. Fearing further tension with the USA Austria is rather sceptical about the proposal to set up a “nucleus collective capability” in Tervuren.

4. Mapping of Activities in CFSP-related research

- Major experts, universities and research institutions working in the CFSP field in Austria:
- Universität Wien, Institut für Völkerrecht und Internationale Beziehungen, Vorstand: o.Univ.-Prof. Dr. Hanspeter Neuhold, Universitätsstraße 2, A- 1090 Wien
- Bundesministerium für auswärtige Angelegenheiten
Ballhausplatz 2, A-1014 Wien
- Verfassungsdienst des Bundeskanzleramtes, Ballhausplatz 2, A-1014 Wien
- Bundesministerium für Landesverteidigung, Direktion für Sicherheitspolitik, Stiftgasse 2 a, 1070 Wien
- Österreichische Gesellschaft für Landesverteidigung und Sicherheitspolitik,
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e-mail: sich.politik@magnet.at
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- ÖIES – Österreichisches Institut für Europäische Sicherheitspolitik
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5. Specific remarks on the relation between Austria's national foreign and security policy and CFSP

Austria joined the EU without a reservation regarding its neutrality. Upon joining the European Union in 1995, Austria adopted the Union's entire legal and political "acquis", which then already comprised the Maastricht Treaty and its provisions on CFSP. Article J.4 of the treaty opened the perspective of a common defence policy which in due time could lead to a common defence.

A special provision (Article 23 f) was added to the Austrian Federal Constitution to ensure that participation in the CFSP would not be restricted by the Neutrality act. The Neutrality Act of 1955 was thereby further limited in its effect.

After ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty, the Austrian National assembly in 1998 adopted another constitutional amendment, under which Austria may take part in the whole spectrum of what is known as the Petersberg Tasks, which include combat missions in the context of crisis management, including peace-making missions. Such participation is possible under a EU decision.

On the one hand, this development demonstrates that Austria – at the latest by its unreserved participation in the CFSP – has radically changed its status of permanent neutrality in international law. Hence, on an international comparison, Austria's status in international law corresponds to that of a non-allied state rather than a neutral state. On the other hand, recent opinion polls indicate that more than 70 percent of the Austrians approve the creation of a European army. But neutrality still has many supporters.

The dynamic development of the ESDP is wholeheartedly supported by Austria's present government. Austria thereby wishes to prove its determination to co-operate on an equal footing and in solidarity in all spheres of European security and defence.

Excursus:

Austria and the draft for a new European Security Strategy² (as presented by Mr. Solana at the Thessaloniki summit)

Faced with the Iraq crisis and the differences it created among the Member states, this is the right time to present such a document. According to Austria's viewpoint, some important points such also be stressed in the final version of the Strategy:

- the necessity of a strategic partnership with the Russian Federation
- The primordial role of armament control
- The Balkan wars should be cited as a cautionary example

Sources:

Austrian Security and Defense Doctrine 2002

Report issued by Hannes Farnleitner and Reinhard E. Bösch (Austrian members of the European Convention), CONV 437/02

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² „A secure Europe in a better world“, Doc. SO138/03