



Integrated Country Strategy

Austria

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

Seventy-five years after the Marshall Plan was enacted, U.S. - Austrian relations remain strong, based on our mutual interests, shared ideals, and economic ties. The United States is one of Austria's top two-way trading partners, Austria is one of the fastest growing foreign direct investors in the United States, and our bilateral trade and investment continue to grow.

Deepening our already strong economic relationship with Austria to create more American jobs through expanding trade and Austrian investment in the United States is the cornerstone of our economic engagement.

Our Mission Goals will advance America's interests and values and strengthen and deepen our already strong relationship with Austria across the full range of political, security, economic and social issues that bind our nations together.

Recent events have thrust Austria into an increasingly important regional leadership role, including in the face of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the growing influence of malign actors in Central and Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, international efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, domestic political strife, and terrorism.

Russia's unprovoked, unjustified deadly attack on Ukraine in February 2022 was a flagrant violation of international law and met with worldwide condemnation and massive economic consequences for Russia, and crippling sanctions and export controls imposed by the United States, allies and partners, including the European Union (EU) and Austria. We applaud Austria for its continued support for international efforts standing up to Russian aggression, and our collective support for the Ukrainian people and Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Austria is also a member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and has contributed to peacekeeping and training missions around the world, including hundreds of peacekeepers in Lebanon and in the Western Balkans in NATO's KFOR mission in Kosovo, and the EUFOR Althea mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia's attacks on Ukraine – less than 300 miles from the Austrian border – represents a dangerously close escalation, and Austria has committed to strengthening its defense capabilities and spending. Our security and defense cooperation will

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increase with the launch of the Vermont National Guard State Partnership Program with the Austrian Armed Forces in 2022, enhancing the interoperability of our militaries through joint exercises, training, and other activities.

The deadly Vienna terror attack in November 2020 was a stark reminder that terrorism remains a threat to Austria, Europe and the world. Our Mission Goals reflect the need to strengthen our ties on several fronts such as counterterrorism, information sharing, law enforcement and security cooperation, and countering misinformation to prevent radicalization of youth.

Likewise, supporting diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are important steps to practice what we preach. It is vital that Embassy Vienna reflects the faces of all Americans, whether it's engaging diverse Austrian audiences in our public diplomacy programs, promoting the rich tapestry of American culture and backgrounds in social media, or internally in our Embassy management decisions to develop a more equitable, inclusive and accessible workplace.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Austria supports economic growth, stability, and prosperity in the United States and regionally.

- **Mission Objective 1.1:** Capitalize on the increased trade and economic opportunities in Austria for U.S. companies by reducing regulatory barriers and increasing U.S. exports.
- **Mission Objective 1.2:** Growth of Austrian investment in the United States increases the number of U.S. jobs and furthers U.S. economic development.

Mission Goal 2: Expand engagement with the Austrian public to increase understanding of the United States and strengthen support for the transatlantic relationship and our common goals.

- **Mission Objective 2.1:** Public diplomacy outreach and programs provide Austrians with a clearer understanding of U.S. policies and perspectives.
- **Mission Objective 2.2:** Public diplomacy initiatives highlighting shared values and diversity strengthen Austrian democracy.

Mission Goal 3: As a NATO partner country, Austria becomes a reliable, regional leader in counterterrorism and military capability to enhance security and stability in Europe and beyond.

- **Mission Objective 3.1:** Austria strengthens its role as an advocate for common security and defense interests in Europe and beyond.
- **Mission Objective 3.2:** Austria becomes a stronger security partner for the U.S. by further developing its information assurance and cyber defense program and establishing and utilizing formal information sharing processes with U.S. intelligence, military, and law enforcement agencies.

- **Mission Objective 3.3:** The United States and Austria expand their joint ability to proactively combat terrorism threats, by cooperating closely in implementing Austria's 2021 counterterrorism laws and restructuring its national security apparatus.

Mission Goal 4: U.S. and Austria intelligence sharing, law enforcement, and consular ties ensure the safety of U.S. citizens while facilitating legitimate trade and travel to the United States.

- **Mission Objective 4.1:** Strengthen our network in the aviation, law enforcement, judicial, health, and tourism sectors to increase Mission capabilities to assist U.S. citizens during emergent crisis events.
- **Mission Objective 4.2:** Austria expands its ability to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime, cyber-crime, and fraud by working more closely with U.S. law enforcement to address common threats.

Management Objective 1: Bolster human capital opportunities to support expanding Mission goals through the development of a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace.

Management Objective 2: Counter the ever-evolving cyber-threat to an increasingly mobile workforce by providing a secure network for Tri-Mission Vienna's operations to ensure the integrity of the Tri-Mission's IT platform

Management Objective 3: Drive climate action through Tri-Mission-wide management initiatives and policies to anchor environmental sustainability in Mission business practices

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: | Austria supports economic growth, stability, and prosperity in the United States and regionally.

Description: | The U.S.-Austria economic relationship is an engine for increasing bilateral and regional trade and investment. The result is an increase in economic opportunity for the U.S. and the creation of jobs. The Mission is focused on creating new opportunities while removing regulatory burdens that negatively affect fair trade. This goal directly supports the prosperity goals laid out in the Interim National Security Strategic Guidance.

Objective 1.1: | Capitalize on the increased trade and economic opportunities in Austria for U.S. companies by reducing regulatory barriers and increasing U.S. exports.

- **Objective 1.1 Justification:** | In line with the President's goal to expand economic prosperity and opportunity, the Embassy is committed to growing U.S. exports and Austrian investment in the United States. The United States is Austria's fourth largest trading partner. With Austria's economic rebound projected at over 4% GDP in 2022, Austria presents an opportunity to increase U.S. exports to a market which appreciates the quality and diversity of U.S. products and services. The Austrian government's business-oriented and green party coalition values relations with the United States and holds an agenda aligned closely with the U.S. Administration's climate and digital economic growth priorities, offering an opportunity for closer cooperation on expanding markets and reducing regulatory burdens. It also offers an opening for economic statecraft to assist U.S. firms in finding buyers for U.S. technology and services, as well as to identify opportunities for U.S. industry sectors with strong export and employment potential.

Embassy Vienna works with U.S. companies, Austrian authorities, and Austrian representatives to the European Union to promote market access for U.S. products and services and to encourage Austrian support for freer trade policies in the European

Union. The Embassy facilitates communication between U.S. producers and Austrian regulators to address market access issues before they become formal disputes. The Mission assists U.S. exporters seeking to expand sales, not just in Europe, but throughout Europe. The Embassy also seeks fair consideration for U.S. defense suppliers via the Office of Defense Cooperation, which helps enhance Austria's capabilities in stability operations outside its borders.

- **Objective 1.1 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy; JSP Objective 2.2; JRS Objectives 2.1 and 2.3; FBS Objectives 1.1 and 2.3; Department of Commerce Austria Strategic Plan
- **Objective 1.1 Risks:** | Supply chain disruptions, prolonged recovery from COVID-19 could hamper economic growth.

Objective 1.2: | Growth of Austrian investment in the United States increases the number of U.S. jobs and furthers U.S. economic development.

- **Objective 1.2 Justification:** | U.S. energy, labor, tax, and environmental policies have created competitive advantages for American-based producers compared to sites in Austria. Many Austrian business leaders have been vocal about their support for outward investment, particularly in states that border Mexico and Canada. Austria was the U.S.'s second fastest growing source country for foreign investment in 2020 (up from 10th position in 2019) that directly supports over 33,500 Americans jobs. The U.S.-Austria MOU on Workforce Development/Apprenticeships signed in April 2022 can support increased FDI through its forthcoming multi-year workplan programs.

Embassy Vienna has had unique success in attracting Austrian investment to the United States. The Commercial Section has taken the lead on promoting FDI, with its ongoing SelectUSA program, investment roadshows, and cooperation with U.S. EDOs. Together, the Commercial and Economic sections work closely with the Austrian Economic Chamber (WKO), Industrial Federation and U.S. regional development offices to maximize opportunities for Austrian investors.

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- **Objective 1.2 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; Executive Order on Promoting Competition in the American Economy; JSP Objective 2.2; JRS Objective 2.1; FBS Objectives 1.3 and 2.4.
- **Objective 1.2 Risks:** | Supply chain disruptions, prolonged recovery from COVID-19 could hamper economic growth.

Mission Goal 2: | Expand engagement with the Austrian public to increase understanding of the United States and strengthen support for the transatlantic relationship and our common goals.

Description: | Although Austrians tend to be eager consumers of American technology and popular culture, and view America's economic prowess and entrepreneurial spirit as world class, there is skepticism toward U.S. global leadership, including the impression that the United States acts unilaterally on the world stage, concern about the stability of democracy, societal divides, and polarization in the United States. Mission public diplomacy (PD) outreach seeks to increase understanding of the United States among the Austrian public – and particularly among established opinion leaders (EOL) and emerging voices (EV). PD activities seek to challenge persistent stereotypes and one-sided narratives by exposing Austrian audiences to the diversity of U.S. culture, society, and ideas. The Mission will deploy PD tools ranging from low-threshold activities like school outreach events, panel discussions, and press and social media to more profound forms of engagement such as expert workshops, grants, and exchange programs. In the long term, sustained interaction will strengthen Austrian support for the transatlantic partnership and improve bilateral collaboration on common goals and priorities, including combatting the climate crisis, strengthening democracy, guaranteeing security, stability, and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic.

Objective 2.1: | Public diplomacy outreach and programs provide Austrians with a clearer understanding of U.S. policies and perspectives.

- **Objective 2.1 Justification:** | At a time of when misinformation and political polarization have reached all-time highs, it is crucial for our Mission to be highly effective in

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explaining U.S. policies to Austrian audiences—both EOL and EVs through traditional press and social media outreach. In an ever-changing global information environment, the Public Diplomacy team and the entire Mission must be ready to quickly adapt to emerging international crises and shifting policy priorities. To meet this challenge, the Public Diplomacy Section will enhance its messaging efforts by inviting U.S. experts, arranging interviews for the Ambassador and other United States officials, placing op-eds, and launching social media campaigns on current issues. In addition, Post will provide context on U.S. positions beyond the daily headlines and counter misperceptions about American foreign policy through direct interaction with key contacts.

- **Objective 2.1 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; FY2022-2026 Joint State Department Joint Strategic Plan Framework; State Department 2020 Public Diplomacy Strategic Plan (Goal 1: Build networks of individuals, organizations, and states who share and advance American values and support U.S. policies; Goals 2: Foster global information environments where truth can thrive and lead the global dissemination of accurate information about U.S. policy and American values); Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.
- **Objective 2.1 Risks:** | Disinformation campaigns; lack of resources; lack of credibility; slow clearance processes.

Objective 2.2: | Public diplomacy initiatives highlighting shared values and diversity strengthen Austrian democracy.

- **Objective 2.2 Justification:** | As many Austrians have never had the opportunity to visit the United States, most of their perceptions of the country have been shaped by traditional and social media. To overcome this information barrier and to avoid selective perceptions about the United States, Post seeks to put a particular focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in its PD programming. School visits, speaker programs, and academic exchanges will play a central role as will direct engagement with members of civil society. Inviting high level or prominent U.S. experts from various

fields to Austria will highlight shared transatlantic values and put a focus on areas where the United States is a world leader – e.g. in entrepreneurial activity, popular culture, and scientific or scholarly expertise. In the long run, this will strengthen the American brand in Austria.

- **Objective 2.2 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; FY2022-2026 Joint State Department Joint Strategic Plan Framework; State Department 2020 Public Diplomacy Strategic Plan (Goals 2: Foster global information environments where truth can thrive and lead the global dissemination of accurate information about U.S. policy and American values); Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce; Executive Order 13985 on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government
- **Objective 2.2 Risks:** | Strong focus on political polarization in the U.S.; competition with other global actors; lack of resources for exchanges and programing.

Mission Goal 3: | As a NATO partner country, Austria becomes a reliable, regional leader in counterterrorism and military capability to enhance security and stability in Europe and beyond.

Description: | As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Austria may no longer take its safety at the center of Europe for granted. On February 25, 2022, the Austrian National Security Council declared “a commitment to strengthen Austria’s national and civil defense.” And although Austria has stated an “unwavering commitment to neutrality” it has demonstrated complete solidarity with the EU on political and financial sanctions on Russia. The government wishes to increase defense spending and expand existing military competencies in areas such as cyber-defense, international peacekeeping, search and rescue operations, use of drones, reaction to “terrorist attacks carried out with military means,” and toward future blackouts. Austria remains committed to a close military relationship with the U.S. via participation in the State Partnership Program, NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP)

activities, as well as EU crisis management and battlegroup exercises, including the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) platform.

Objective 3.1: | Austria strengthens its role as an advocate for common security and defense interests in Europe and beyond.

- **Objective 3.1 Justification:** | Defense modernization and interoperability are critical factors in Austria's participation in UN- and EU-sanctioned peacekeeping operations a fundamental pillar of its foreign and security policy, despite its neutrality. Finally, the US Government's extensive use of Austrian air and ground (road/rail) corridors to move military personnel and materiel within and outside of Europe are essential to U.S. forces' ability to support NATO's security on its eastern flank.
- **Objective 3.1 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; 2018 National Defense Strategy; 2018 National Military Strategy
- **Objective 3.1 Risks:** | Overall, Austrians see the role of the Armed Forces as more of a defensive and disaster response force, rather than as a tool of foreign and security policy. There is only moderate public support for overseas missions, and strong opposition to any consideration of NATO membership. With no more than 0.65% of GDP, Austria's defense budget is chronically among the lowest in Europe. Due to a top-heavy rank structure and a generous pension system, the military currently devotes almost 70% of its budget (€1.6 billion) to personnel costs and overall Austria historically lacks political will to fund a fully equipped national military.

Objective 3.2: | Austria becomes a stronger security partner for the U.S. by further developing its information assurance and cyber defense program and establishing and utilizing formal information sharing processes with U.S. intelligence, military, and law enforcement agencies.

- **Objective 3.2 Justification:** | The Austrian Federal Chancellery has oversight of the cybersecurity strategy and the Ministry of Interior responsibility for its implementation. The government's ability to counter, investigate, and prosecute cyber threats is on par

with their EU counterparts. Austria also cooperates in efforts to foster international security in cyberspace within the UN, the OSCE, NATO, and the EU.

- **Objective 3.2 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance; 2018 National Defense Strategy; 2018 National Military Strategy, Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity May 12, 2021
- **Objective 3.2 Risks:** | On cyber issues, Austria has difficulty navigating the interface between the civilian and military spheres including the exchange of classified military information that may be needed on the civilian side or information on individuals subject to privacy laws that may be useful to the military's cyber-threat teams.

Objective 3.3: | The United States and Austria expand their joint ability to proactively combat terrorism threats, by cooperating closely in implementing Austria's 2021 counterterrorism laws and restructuring its national security apparatus.

- **Objective 3.3 Justification:** | Austria needs support from the international community, including the United States, to build the capacity and best practices in of its newly formed counterterrorism and national security apparatus to effectively disrupt future threats.
- **Objective 3.3 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance
- **Objective 3.3 Risks:** | Austria's recent experience with the November 2020 attacks showed how gaps in coordination can result in missed opportunities in disrupting threats. Lack of partnership will result in further unresolved counterterrorism threats.

Mission Goal 4: | U.S. and Austria intelligence sharing, law enforcement, and consular ties ensure the safety of U.S. citizens while facilitating legitimate trade and travel to the United States.

Description: | The protection of U.S. citizens abroad is the top priority for all U.S. Missions. The terrorist attacks of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict are stark reminders that crises can occur anywhere, anytime. At the same time, the mission recognizes

that facilitating legitimate business travel and trade increases investment and jobs in the United States. It is therefore vital that the mission – particularly law enforcement and consular sections – can share vital and accurate information quickly and effectively with Austrian counterparts.

Objective 4.1: | Strengthen our network in the aviation, law enforcement, judicial, health, and tourism sectors to increase Mission capabilities to assist U.S. citizens during emergent crisis events.

- **Objective 4.1 Justification:** | Embassy Vienna is a hub for regional law enforcement cooperation. DHS, FBI and DEA cover a mix of the following countries from post: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. This makes Embassy Vienna a platform for achieving rule of law and security objectives throughout the region. With the increased scope and complexity of transnational criminal activity, resident law enforcement agencies face expanded challenges, particularly in the cyber realm.

The Embassy will continue to encourage the Austrian government to enhance its efforts to combat terrorism, cyber-crime, narcotics trafficking, arms proliferation, child exploitation, trafficking in persons, organized crime, and other transnational crime.

Recognizing the government's desire to improve certain law enforcement capabilities, the Embassy will increase its focus on cyber-security issues and support Austria's efforts to harden its computer networks and fight cyber-crime. Post will continue to advocate strong measures to trace financial transactions related to terrorism and transnational crimes, to reduce opportunities for money laundering, and to prosecute human trafficking offenders more aggressively.

- **Objective 4.1 Linkages:** | Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, Executive Order on Establishing the United States Council on Transnational Organized Crime
- **Objective 4.1 Risks:** | Austria is unable to fully staff agencies within the Ministry of Interior leading to increased time lapses in information sharing and law enforcement cooperation.

Objective 4.2: | Austria expands its ability to combat terrorism, transnational crime, cyber-crime, and fraud by working more closely with U.S. law enforcement to address common threats.

- **Objective 4.2 Justification:** | Austria's central location makes it vulnerable as a transit point for threat actors in the region. US must work to support the Austrians to ensure such travel does not result in threats to the West.
- **Objective 4.2 Linkages:** | Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance
- **Objective 4.2 Risks:** | Austria is utilized by actors traveling from the Balkans and/or conflict zones to access Western Europe for nefarious purposes.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: | Bolster human capital opportunities to support expanding Mission goals through the development of a more diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workplace.

- **Objective 1 Justification:** | Advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace is a whole of enterprise effort resulting in a recruiting, developing and retaining a talented and dynamic workforce which advances Mission goals and supports the work of the Administration.
- **Objective 1 Linkages:** | Presidential Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce Strategic Plan. Preliminary Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Strategic Plan.
- **Objective 1 Risks:** | Advancing DEIA is one of the Department's top management priorities. Not aligning with these objectives and values will be detrimental to the Tri-Mission's recruitment, development, and retention goals.

Management Objective 2: | Counter the ever-evolving cyber-threat to an increasingly mobile workforce by providing a secure network for Tri-Mission Vienna's operations to ensure the integrity of the Tri-Mission's IT platform.

- **Objective 2 Justification:** | Maintaining the integrity of our computer and communications infrastructure and platform, keeping it current and updated, and safeguarding it from cybersecurity threats is key to advancing our objectives. In line with the Department's Modernization agenda, a secure and available network, and a nimble workforce properly trained on cybersecurity vulnerabilities provide a primary tool for fulfilling the Mission's goals.
- **Objective 2 Linkages:** | Executive Order on Improving the Nation's Cybersecurity, Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, DOS IT Strategic Plan, JSP Objective 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.

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- **Objective 2 Risks:** | A vulnerable network and workforce can be easily compromised resulting in obstacles in achieving the mission's goals and potentially result in grave threats to national security.

Management Objective 3: | Drive climate action through Tri-Mission-wide management initiatives and policies to anchor environmental sustainability in Mission business practices.

- **Objective 3 Justification:** | In what President Biden terms the “decisive decade” for climate action, the Tri-Mission needs to lead by example and accelerate action by institutionalizing sustainable strategies, policies and business practices. The Austrian context provides ample opportunities for green energy initiatives and improvements such as zero-emissions energy, broad recycling programs, electric vehicle chargers, etc. The Tri-Mission should leverage these opportunities internally to green business processes and drive climate action, while at the same time engaging with the local government on our shared commitments to tackle the climate crisis.
- **Objective 3 Linkages:** | Interim National Security Strategic Guidance, Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad; Federal Sustainability Plan; State Department's annual Sustainability Plan; Climate Adaption and Resilience Plan.
- **Objective 3 Risks:** | Failing to institutionalize sustainability and resilience in Tri-Mission business practices runs counter to official policy and will undermine current and future operations, stressing future budgets.