

## Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN at UVU



Austria is a German-speaking country in Central Europe, characterized by mountain villages, baroque architecture, Imperial history and rugged Alpine terrain. Up until 1918, Austria was actually Austria-Hungary, an empire consisting of two independent states who shared a common ruler. Franz Joseph Karl was Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, and monarch of many other states that belonged to the empire. In 1918, right after World War I, the empire collapsed and Austria was reduced to the main, mostly German-speaking areas of the empire, and adopted the name The Republic of German-Austria. In 1955, Austria finally became an independent republic, as it is now. Austria has a federal government system, which is composed of the Chancellor, who is head of government, the Vice-Chancellor, and the ministers.

Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations, Ambassador Jan Kickert lectured at Utah Valley University on February 19, 2019. Austrian diplomat said during his discussion that “you must get along with your neighbors, if you don’t, life gets

complicated.” Austria shares a border with seven different countries, so that could not be truer. Austria joined the UN and the EU in 1955, and have been helping in peacekeeping operations ever since. Austria has been a part of the Security Council 3 times at the UN, and always tries its best to be a part of it again. Because it is such a small country, Austria does not have a permanent seat in the Council, and to get a temporary one it needs a 2/3 majority vote from those who do have a permanent seat. “If you can get Berlin and Paris to agree to something, it’s highly likely all other countries in the EU will follow.” Said Ambassador Kickert.

Austria is big on all humanitarian issues. It is working on a treaty prohibiting nuclear powers because explosive weapons in populated areas often result in 90-95% civilian casualties, and it want to keep the civilian count as low as possible because civilians aren’t the enemy. Austria also strongly believe in climate change, and it is working on an adaptation strategy. The objective of the Austrian adaptation strategy is to avoid the adverse effects of climate change on the environment, society, and the economy and to fully utilize any opportunities that may arise. The adoption of an adaptation strategy should strengthen natural, social, and technological adaptive capacities. Adaptation measures should thus involve no social downsides; rather, they should minimize risks to democracy, health, security, and social justice. It also seeks to provide recommendations for each of the various areas and to identify linkages for all the actors challenged with implementation. In accordance with the precautionary principle, the strategy attempts to lay a foundation for forward-looking action with regard to future climate change impacts and to foster successful implementation. A proactive approach is recommended, because as climate change progresses, the opportunities for successful adaptation diminish and the associated costs increase.

Similar to Switzerland, Austria is small and mighty. The services sector forms some two thirds of the Gross Domestic Product of 232 billion Euros. Trade and industry make up about a third of the GDP, agriculture contributes some 2 %. With an average per capita GDP of about 27,000, Euros, Austria ranks among the European Communities richest countries.

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<https://www.austria.info/us/basic-facts/about-austria/trade-industry>