

Université de Montréal

**Intégration européenne et pratique diplomatique :
l'expérience autrichienne (1987-2009)**

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Résumé

Ce mémoire vise à élucider les implications de l'intégration européenne pour les diplomaties nationales. À partir d'une approche sociologique axée sur les pratiques des individus, une étude de cas est menée sur la diplomatie autrichienne, pour la période allant de 1987 à 2009. S'appuyant sur une vingtaine d'entretiens conduits en 2009 à Vienne, cette étude rend compte, d'une part, des changements engendrés par l'intégration européenne de l'Autriche au regard des pratiques et des représentations de ses diplomates concernant la politique de neutralité. D'autre part, nous relatons le processus d'adaptation des diplomates et du ministère des Affaires étrangères autrichiens aux exigences pratiques et aux dynamiques sociales de l'interaction diplomatique au sein de l'Union européenne (UE). En somme, notre étude montre que les diplomates impliqués dans la gestion des affaires (tant internes qu'externes) de l'UE convergent autour d'un certain nombre de règles et de représentations sociales; cette dynamique a des implications substantielles pour les diplomaties nationales intégrées relativement tardivement dans l'UE, comme ce fut le cas pour l'Autriche.

Mots-clés : Autriche, diplomatie, Union européenne (UE), ministère des Affaires étrangères, sociologie, politique communautaire, Politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (PESC), neutralité, européanisation

Abstract

This master's thesis seeks to analyse the implications of European integration for national diplomacy. Using a sociological approach premised on individuals' practices, I undertake a case study, spanned between 1987 and 2009, on the Austrian diplomatic corps. This study - which draws upon interview material collected in Vienna in 2009 – recounts the changes brought by European integration for Austrian diplomats' practices and representations of neutrality, the latter being a core tenet of Austria's diplomacy during the Cold War. We also concentrate on the adaptation process undergone by Austrian diplomats and their foreign ministry regarding the social dynamics at play in diplomatic interaction within the European Union (EU). Overall, I argue that diplomats involved in the daily management of EU business (either internal or external affairs) converge on a set of rules and social representations; altogether this process amounts to substantial adaptation and change for a diplomatic corps joining the EU in 1995 like Austria's.

Keywords : Austria, diplomacy, European Union (EU), foreign ministry, sociology, European Community affairs, Common foreign and security policy (CFSP), neutrality, Europeanization

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Liste des sigles et des abréviations¹

AELE	Association européenne de libre-échange
BMEIA	Ministère fédéral pour les Affaires européennes et internationales (<i>Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten</i>)
BENELUX	Union douanière entre la Belgique, les Pays-Bas et le Luxembourg
BIRD	Banque internationale pour la reconstruction et le développement
CE / EC	Communauté européenne / <i>European Community</i>
CECA	Communauté européenne du charbon et de l'acier
CEE	Communauté économique européenne
CIG	Conférence intergouvernementale (de l'UE)
CIVCOM	Comité chargé des aspects civils de la gestion des crises
CJCE	Cour de justice des Communautés européennes
CMUE	Comité militaire de l'Union européenne
COMECON	Conseil de l'aide économique mutuelle (des régimes communistes de l'Europe de l'Est)
COPS / PSC	Comité politique et de sécurité / <i>Political and Security Committee</i>
COREPER	Comité des représentants permanents
COREU	Correspondance européenne (système de communication crypté)
CPE	Coopération politique européenne
DG	Direction générale (section administrative)
EEE	Espace économique européen
FMI	Fonds monétaire international
FPÖ	Parti de la liberté autrichien (<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>)
GATT	<i>General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade</i>

¹ La formulation anglophone des sigles est fournie lorsque ceux-ci sont mentionnés en anglais dans les extraits d'entretiens reproduits dans ce mémoire. Les termes allemands de certains sigles d'origine autrichienne sont également indiqués.

MAE	Ministère des Affaires étrangères (de l'Autriche)
N+N (groupe)	Groupe des pays neutres et non alignés
OECE	Organisation européenne de coopération économique
OI	Organisation internationale
ONG	Organisation non gouvernementale
ONU / UN	Organisation des Nations Unies / <i>United Nations</i>
OTAN	Organisation du traité de l'Atlantique Nord (Alliance atlantique)
ÖVP	Parti du peuple autrichien (<i>Österreichische Volkspartei</i>)
PESC	Politique étrangère et de sécurité commune
PESD	Politique européenne de sécurité et de défense
PPP / Pfp	Partenariat pour la paix (OTAN) / Partnership for Peace
RP	Représentant permanent (auprès de l'UE)
RPA	Représentation permanente de l'Autriche auprès de l'UE
RPI	Représentant permanent au COREPER I
RPII	Représentant permanent au COREPER II
SEAE	Service européen pour l'action extérieure
SPÖ	Parti socialiste autrichien / Parti social-démocrate autrichien (<i>Sozialistische Partei / Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs</i>)
TUE	Traité sur l'Union européenne
UE / EU	Union européenne / <i>European Union</i>
UEO	Union de l'Europe occidentale
URSS / USSR	Union des républiques socialistes soviétiques / <i>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</i>

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Introduction

Le 26 juillet 2010, les 27 ministres des Affaires étrangères de l'Union européenne (UE) entérinaient la mise en place du Service européen pour l'action extérieure (SEAE)². Ayant pour but d'accroître la cohésion de la politique étrangère de l'UE, le SEAE sera composé de fonctionnaires provenant de la Commission, du secrétariat du Conseil et des services diplomatiques nationaux (Conseil de l'UE 2010). Bien que ces derniers continueront, du moins à court ou moyen terme, d'opérer en parallèle avec le SEAE, cette nouveauté institutionnelle frappe l'imaginaire; une telle mise en commun de ressources diplomatiques nationales est inusitée dans l'histoire du système étatique westphalien, dont l'existence même est étroitement liée au développement de l'institution diplomatique (Bátora 2005)³. Au-delà du SEAE, si l'on considère ce lien constitutif entre la diplomatie et le système interétatique, l'intégration européenne dans son ensemble pose directement la question du changement dans la pratique de la diplomatie en Europe.

En effet, comment la pratique de la diplomatie se présente-t-elle dans un contexte où une partie de la souveraineté nationale a été déléguée à des institutions communes; où bon nombre de fonctionnaires spécialisés sont insérés dans un réseau dense de relations avec leurs homologues européens; et où les diplomates - toujours en fonction malgré tout - sont amenés à interagir étroitement pour articuler une diplomatie collective envers

² Le SEAE est prévu par le traité de Lisbonne, entré en vigueur en décembre 2009.

³ Cette dynamique a été mise en exergue, notamment, par Der Derian (1987), qui souligne : « diplomacy emerges as the collective and reflexive embodiment of the states' ultimate task – self-preservation in an alien environment » (Der Derian 1987, 111, tel que cité dans Bátora 2005, 45).

le reste du monde? En d'autres termes, qu'est-ce que cela signifie pour les diplomates de représenter un État membre de l'UE plutôt qu'un État nation « traditionnel »?

Ce mémoire vise à élucider les implications de l'intégration européenne pour les diplomaties nationales au sein de l'UE. L'angle d'analyse privilégié est celui de la diplomatie comme pratique sociale plutôt que résultat ou substance, cette seconde option correspondant plutôt à la politique étrangère d'un gouvernement (Bátora et Hocking 2009, 115). Dans cette perspective, notre principal argument est que les diplomates impliqués dans la gestion des affaires de l'UE convergent autour d'un certain nombre de règles et de représentations sociales qui, en définitive, ont des implications substantielles pour les corps diplomatiques nationaux, ce qui inclut les diplomates eux-mêmes et les ministères des Affaires étrangères.

Notre analyse repose sur une étude de cas de la diplomatie autrichienne, intégrée dans l'UE à partir de 1995. Le cas autrichien est peu étudié dans la littérature sur les diplomaties nationales au sein de l'UE. Il s'agit pourtant d'un cas fort pertinent pour étudier cette question si l'on considère, notamment, la trajectoire relativement autonome de l'Autriche neutre dans l'Europe de la guerre froide. Avant de procéder à cette analyse, il convient de s'attarder à la littérature existante sur le sujet en cause.

État des connaissances

La majeure partie de la littérature sur l'interaction diplomatique au sein de l'UE s'inscrit, implicitement ou explicitement, dans les logiques d'action sociale identifiées par James March et Johan Olsen (1998), soit les logiques de conséquence et de l'à

propos (*appropriateness*). Selon la première, les individus (et les gouvernements) agissent en fonction des conséquences qu'ils attendent de leurs actes et partant, leur comportement est basé sur un calcul sopesant les coûts et les bénéfices de différentes options pour l'atteinte de leurs objectifs personnels ou collectifs (March et Olsen 1998, 949). Ainsi, selon la logique de conséquence,

un ordre politique émerge de la négociation entre des acteurs rationnels poursuivant leurs préférences ou leurs intérêts personnels dans des circonstances où il peut y avoir des gains à l'action coordonnée. L'atteinte de la coordination et les termes de celle-ci dépendent de la position [pouvoir] de négociation des acteurs (March et Olsen 1998, 949).

Pour March et Olsen, l'action sociale ne peut être expliquée seulement par la logique de conséquence; il faut aussi tenir compte de la logique de l'à propos. Selon cette dernière, l'action humaine est fondée sur des règles et des identités sociales, les individus déduisant les implications de ces éléments idéationnels pour leur action dans une situation donnée (March et Olsen 1998, 951).

La présente section passe en revue les auteurs privilégiant une logique de conséquence, puis ceux penchant davantage vers une logique de l'à propos. Des contributions plus nuancées, s'insérant au croisement de ces deux tendances, sont également considérées. En définitive, il apparaît clairement que les logiques de conséquence et de l'à propos ne suffisent pas à rendre compte de certains aspects fondamentaux de la coopération diplomatique au sein de l'UE.

La logique de conséquence au sein de l'UE

La logique de conséquence domine chez les (néo)réalistes, pour qui le système international est peuplé d'États unitaires dont l'action internationale vise essentiellement

à maximiser leurs gains par rapport aux autres États (March et Olsen 1998, 952). Instigateur du courant intergouvernementaliste en études européennes, Stanley Hoffmann, qui s'inscrit dans la tradition du réalisme classique, a adopté une approche plus nuancée à cet égard, mais son analyse demeure centrée sur l'État (Saurugger 2009, 94-107; Cini 2007, 100-5); il soutient que celui-ci peut décider de partager ou de déléguer sa souveraineté lorsque cela est conforme à sa « situation nationale »⁴ et que ses intérêts nationaux convergent avec ceux d'autres États (Hoffmann 1966). Philip Gordon (1997) a soutenu un point de vue comparable à celui d'Hoffmann. Pour Gordon, les États ne partagent leur souveraineté et n'agissent en commun que lorsque les gains dépassent les coûts de la perte de souveraineté ou de prestige national, ou lorsque les intérêts nationaux convergent au point où l'action commune n'implique aucun sacrifice réel pour la souveraineté nationale (Gordon 1997, 81).

Les (néo)réalistes sont particulièrement sceptiques quant à la coopération en matière de politique étrangère et de sécurité. Selon Hoffmann et Gordon notamment, les conditions pour la coopération dans ce domaine sont et resteront fort probablement absentes en Europe, les bénéfices étant trop faibles et/ou les intérêts nationaux ne convergeant que rarement (Gordon 1997, 81; Hoffmann 1966, 2000)⁵. Se penchant sur le futur de la Politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (PESC) de l'UE, Adrian Hyde-

⁴ La situation nationale renvoie pour Hoffmann aux facteurs « objectifs » comme la géographie, l'économie et la puissance militaire, et à des facteurs « subjectifs » comme les valeurs, les opinions, les traditions dans l'évaluation des autres États, etc. (Hoffman 1966, 75). On voit donc que l'approche réaliste de Hoffmann se distingue de celle adoptée par la plupart des réalistes, pour lesquels les facteurs culturels de la politique étrangère n'ont aucun impact sur les intérêts de l'État (Cini 2007, 101).

⁵ Dans son article de 1966 « Obsolete or Obsolete », Hoffmann insistait sur le fait que l'intégration ne pouvait se limiter qu'au domaine des « low politics », par opposition aux « high politics », dont la politique étrangère et la défense, qui constituaient selon lui le cœur inaltérable de la souveraineté nationale. Cet accent mis sur l'importance de la politique étrangère et de défense pour la souveraineté est typique de l'école réaliste (Cini 2007 :100-2).

Price souligne quant à lui que celle-ci est destinée à se limiter aux questions secondaires, qui ne touchent pas les intérêts fondamentaux des États membres (Hyde-Price 2006, 231).

Hoffmann, Jones et Hyde-Price soulèvent tous, comme facteur explicatif de la PESC, le contexte international caractérisé par l'hégémonie américaine. Pour Hoffmann et Jones, la coopération en matière politique et de sécurité a été stimulée par le fort désir des Européens d'avoir une autonomie accrue face à la superpuissance américaine après la fin de la guerre froide (Hoffmann 2000, 7; Jones 2007, 11). Jones ajoute que cette coopération doit être comprise comme une stratégie de la France et du Royaume-Uni visant à ancrer l'Allemagne à l'Europe, et plus largement, comme une stratégie des trois grandes puissances européennes visant à accroître leur pouvoir l'une vis-à-vis l'autre et vis-à-vis la puissance américaine (Jones 2007, 11). Hyde-Price, de son côté, estime que la PESC est utilisée par les grandes puissances de l'UE pour créer, par le *hard* et le *soft power*, la stabilité externe des relations internationales et une contre-hégémonie face aux États-Unis (Hyde-Price 2006, 222).

Bref, dans la littérature (néo)réaliste, la coopération multilatérale dans l'UE résulte d'un calcul stratégique par les États des coûts et bénéfices de celle-ci, en fonction de leur intérêt national, défini de manière exogène à l'interaction européenne (March et Olsen 1998, 952).

Du côté d'auteurs de tendance plus libérale, Andrew Moravcsik (1998) soutient que l'UE est un régime international basé sur les négociations ponctuelles entre les États

membres, où chacun d'eux cherche à maximiser ses gains absolus en fonction des préférences émergeant de son contexte domestique. Comme chez les réalistes, la dynamique de la coopération multilatérale est présentée par Moravcsik comme une interaction entre des acteurs étatiques unitaires (au niveau international) et rationnels, dont les intérêts sont établis avant toute interaction internationale. S'attardant essentiellement aux grandes conférences intergouvernementales (CIG) dans l'histoire de l'UE, Moravcsik considère que l'intégration européenne est une série de « choix pour l'Europe », choix qui sont en fait contraints par le pouvoir relatif de marchandage des États membres.

Les libéraux tendent par ailleurs à mettre l'accent sur le règlement des problèmes de coordination par l'entremise de l'UE et sur le fait que les institutions européennes permettent de « sécuriser » (*lock-in*), par la supervision du respect des accords, les gains engrangés par les États lors des négociations internationales. Wolfgang Wagner (2003) soutient, par exemple, que la PESC demeurera intergouvernementale car elle est essentiellement destinée à la gestion de crises, lesquelles mettent en jeu des problèmes de coordination rapide (*fast coordination games*), et ne requiert donc pas d'institutions supranationales pour superviser l'exécution des traités.

En somme, chez les (néo)réalistes et les libéraux, la coopération multilatérale au sein de l'UE s'explique essentiellement par une logique de conséquence. Cette logique, qui privilégie l'aspect stratégique de l'action humaine au détriment de son contexte social, est par ailleurs opérationnalisée d'un point de vue macrosociologique, en s'attardant à l'État dans son ensemble. À cela s'ajoute une conception ponctuelle de la

coopération : celle-ci semble se limiter à une série de sommets intergouvernementaux ou à des rencontres *ad hoc* de gestion de crises, sous-estimant ainsi l'aspect routinier et quotidien des institutions de l'UE.

Perspectives médianes

Comme le remarque Michelle Cini, la littérature tend à avoir évolué progressivement de l'explication de l'existence des institutions européennes (institutions comme variable dépendante) à l'explication des effets de ces dernières (institutions comme variable indépendante) (Cini 2007, 121). Ainsi, les deux dernières décennies ont vu se développer de manière croissante une littérature sur l'eupéanisation des États membres (Featherstone 2003, 5). Cette littérature se distingue des perspectives (néo)réalistes et libérales par l'importance qu'elle accorde aux institutions de l'UE et à leurs effets sur le fonctionnement interne de l'État, mais elle demeure largement inscrite dans une logique de conséquence en ce qui a trait au comportement des acteurs.

Pour plusieurs auteurs, l'intégration européenne implique un processus d'eupéanisation *top-down*, par lequel les États membres et les acteurs gouvernementaux sont soumis aux pressions générées par l'UE pour ajuster leurs politiques et leurs institutions (e.g. Börzel et Risse 2003; Ladrech 1994; Wong 2005; Schimmelfennig 2005; Müller et Alecu de Flers 2009). Selon Caporaso, Cowles et Risse (2001), l'intensité et le caractère de ce processus dépendent du niveau d'adéquation des institutions nationales aux modèles en provenance de Bruxelles. Le concept d'eupéanisation *top-down* fait ressortir les effets contraignants des institutions et tend à privilégier la rationalité instrumentale dans l'explication du comportement des acteurs

nationaux.⁶ À titre d'exemple, Frank Schimmelfennig et Ulrich Sedelmeier (2005) décrivent le processus d'eupéanisation des pays est-européens devenus membres de l'UE en mettant l'accent sur le comportement instrumental de ces derniers face aux divers incitatifs et pressions utilisées par l'UE.

Par ailleurs, dans une perspective assez proche de l'intergouvernementalisme, plusieurs auteurs se sont attardés à une dynamique d'eupéanisation *bottom-up*, par laquelle les États membres de l'UE projettent leurs préférences au niveau européen (voir notamment Wong 2005; Torreblanca 2001; Börzel et Risse 2003). Ce concept met en évidence la rationalité instrumentale des États dans leurs rapports avec les institutions européennes.⁷

Au-delà des partisans du concept d'eupéanisation⁸, d'autres auteurs combinent les logiques de l'à propos et de conséquence pour expliquer le fonctionnement de la coopération au sein de l'UE. Faisant écho à Gordon, Roy Ginsberg soutient que la coopération politique est stimulée, entre autres, par la possibilité pour les États membres de donner une efficacité et un poids plus grands à leur action extérieure que s'ils n'agissaient seuls (Ginsberg 2001, 26-32). Toutefois, malgré cette logique instrumentale, « la PESC façonne les perceptions, les choix et le comportement des États membres » selon Ginsberg (2001, 13). Celui-ci se dit également d'accord avec Christopher Hill et

⁶ Le concept d'eupéanisation de type *top-down* a surtout été utilisé en référence aux domaines communautarisés du premier pilier de l'UE, mais certains auteurs l'appliquent également aux politiques étrangères (e.g. Wong 2005; Müller et Alecu de Flers 2009).

⁷ Plusieurs auteurs qui utilisent le concept d'eupéanisation *bottom-up* analysent également la dynamique inverse, c'est-à-dire l'influence de l'UE sur les politiques étrangères nationales et/ou les idées et les croyances des acteurs politiques nationaux (voir Wong 2005; Torreblanca 2001; Müller et Alecu de Flers 2009). Une telle démarche combine donc les logiques de conséquence et de l'à propos.

⁸ Nous faisons ici référence à l'eupéanisation comme concept explicatif, tels les concepts d'eupéanisation *top-down* ou *bottom-up*. Le terme « eupéanisation » peut aussi être utilisé comme un

William Wallace (1996, 8-10) à l'effet que la participation à la PESC peut contribuer à forger une identité collective (Ginsberg 2001, 26).

De leur côté, Elfriede Regelsberger et Wolfgang Wessels (2007) expliquent l'intégration européenne, y compris la PESC, en combinant une prémisse statocentriste à une explication inspirée du néofonctionnalisme⁹. À l'instar de l'intergouvernementalisme, Regelsberger et Wessels considèrent les divers sommets européens (CIG) – et partant les intérêts nationaux - comme les forces motrices de l'UE. Toutefois, ces grandes décisions ponctuelles ne fournissent que les structures d'opportunité pour la coopération et ne sont que le point de départ d'un processus d'institutionnalisation autonome. Au quotidien, tous les acteurs, nationaux et européens, tentent d'influencer les arrangements institutionnels et les politiques de l'UE, ce qui alimente l'institutionnalisation toujours accrue de celle-ci. De plus, l'interaction quotidienne contribue à socialiser les acteurs, en façonnant un mode de pensée européen, qui à son tour façonne les arrangements institutionnels. Au final, les États sont irrémédiablement entraînés (*locked-in*) dans le processus d'intégration européenne et l'autonomie nationale s'en trouve de plus en plus réduite (Regelsberger et Wessels 2007, 113-16).

simple concept descriptif (e.g. Mérand 2008a).

⁹ Le néofonctionnalisme, théorisé par Ernst Haas dans les années 1950, fut la première théorie de l'intégration européenne. Selon cette approche, « l'intégration est un processus incrémental, impliquant un effet d'engrenage d'un secteur à l'autre, menant ultimement à une sorte de communauté politique ». Le néofonctionnalisme de Haas est une synthèse du fonctionnalisme de David Mitrany et de la théorie des communautés de sécurité de Karl Deutsch (Cini 2007, 86-7/462).

Conceptualisations de la logique de l'à propos

Pour Schimmelfennig (2003), les organisations internationales (OI) ne font pas que réguler le comportement de l'État, mais elles constituent également leurs identités et leurs intérêts et contribuent ainsi à construire une communauté. Corollairement, participer à l'UE implique d'adhérer à sa culture, i.e. son identité, ses normes et ses valeurs (Schimmelfennig 2003, 70-1). Toutefois, cela n'exclut pas toute action instrumentale de la part des agents. La notion d'action rhétorique fournit parfois, comme dans le cas de l'élargissement de l'UE, le lien causal entre des préférences étatiques basées sur des intérêts matériels et un résultat basé sur les normes d'une communauté (Schimmelfennig 2003, 200). L'action rhétorique réfère à l'usage stratégique et instrumental d'arguments reposant sur les normes constitutives d'une communauté (Schimmelfennig 2001, 62). En utilisant ces arguments normatifs de manière purement instrumentale, les agents se trouvent souvent contraints malgré eux de se comporter comme s'ils avaient effectivement internalisé ces normes (Schimmelfennig 2001, 65). Sedelmeier abonde dans le même sens que Schimmelfennig et croit que l'action rhétorique peut jouer un rôle important au sein des organisations internationales lorsque les agents sont faiblement socialisés (Sedelmeier 2004, 129).

Pour sa part, Jeffrey Checkel (2005) soutient que le comportement des acteurs impliqués dans une OI comme l'UE répond souvent au départ à une logique de conséquence. Or, avec le temps, l'adaptation consciente des agents aux normes d'une OI est susceptible d'être remplacée, d'abord par l'internalisation de rôles, ensuite par une logique d'argumentation et de persuasion, puis finalement par l'internalisation complète des normes, au point où elles sont prises pour acquises et suivies inconsciemment

(Checkel 2005 :804-12). Bien qu'ils n'explicitent pas nécessairement une telle conception évolutive, plusieurs auteurs de tendance constructiviste insistent pour ne pas éliminer complètement la logique de conséquence de leur analyse de la coopération européenne (e.g. Wong 2005; Tonra 2001; Glarbo 2001; Torreblanca 2001). Tonra, par exemple, souligne que les acteurs ne sont pas des « dupes culturelles » et qu'ils peuvent chercher à exploiter les discours identitaires à des fins stratégiques (Tonra 2001, 29). Wong, quant à lui, considère la PESC comme une « force sociologique » qui peut amener une reconstruction identitaire, mais il estime néanmoins que son attrait pour les États membres réside dans le fait qu'elle permet d'atteindre plus facilement certaines fins et confère plus de légitimité à l'action (Wong 2005).

Conformément à l'un des mécanismes identifiés par Checkel, plusieurs auteurs soutiennent que les participants aux institutions de l'UE sont progressivement amenés à agir consciemment selon le rôle qui est attendu d'eux dans une situation quelconque (Tonra 2003; Aggestam 2004; Checkel 2005; Beyers 2005). Dans cette perspective, les agents sont des « joueurs de rôle » (Tonra 2003, 739; Wong 2005). De même, plusieurs auteurs mettent l'accent sur les dynamiques d'argumentation et de délibération au sein des institutions de l'UE (Joerges et Neyer 1997; Risse 2000; Tonra 2003; Sedelmeier 2004; Jorgensen 2004; Sjursen 2004; Lewis 2005; Checkel 2005). Ces mécanismes sont utilisés par les agents pour atteindre un consensus sur les actions appropriées à suivre à la lumière des normes de leur communauté institutionnalisée. Alors que les agents « tentent de se persuader et de se convaincre les uns les autres; leurs intérêts et leurs préférences sont ouverts à la redéfinition » (Checkel 2005, 812). En lien étroit avec ces mécanismes, certains auteurs mettent l'accent sur « l'apprentissage social » (*social*

learning) qui s'effectue à travers l'interaction et la communication entre les agents (Checkel 2001; Tonra 2003). L'apprentissage en cause ici est largement conçu comme un processus réflexif, comme c'est le cas dans la majorité des études constructivistes (Pouliot 2008, 262).

Bilan et critiques

En somme, les nombreuses études consacrées à la coopération au sein de l'UE tendent à partager certaines faiblesses communes, au premier rang desquelles l'incapacité de concevoir de façon intégrée l'action stratégique des acteurs nationaux et l'aspect constitutif du contexte social européen. De plus, tant chez les auteurs qui privilégient l'aspect stratégique que chez ceux mettant l'accent sur le contexte social, l'analyse est souvent limitée à une perspective macrosociologique, axée sur l'État plutôt que sur les individus (ou groupes d'individus plus restreints) qui concrétisent quotidiennement la coopération multilatérale au sein de l'UE.

En outre, en ce qui a trait spécifiquement à la littérature sur la logique de l'à propos, elle tend à négliger les *pratiques* des individus en portant essentiellement son attention sur des éléments discursifs. Or, comme le suggère Iver Neumann (2002), il convient d'articuler les significations intersubjectives avec les aspects matériels (pratiques) de l'action sociale, puisque ce sont ces derniers qui permettent de produire et de reproduire les schèmes de perception d'un groupe d'individus. Dans cet ordre d'idées, alors que plusieurs des auteurs évoqués précédemment mettent l'accent sur la nature réflexive des processus de socialisation chez les élites européennes, il nous semble qu'il faut considérer davantage les processus d'apprentissage tacites, i.e. non

réflexifs, qui sont ancrés dans les pratiques des individus impliqués dans les affaires européennes.

Face aux problèmes identifiés dans la littérature, un cadre d'analyse sociologique, inspiré de la sociologie de Pierre Bourdieu, nous apparaît utile. Une telle approche est adoptée dans un nombre croissant d'études sur l'intégration européenne (e.g. Ekengren 2002; Kauppi 2003; Mérand 2008; Adler-Nissen 2008) et en Relations internationales (e.g. Williams 2007; Mérand et Pouliot, 2008).

Cadre d'analyse

Dans l'optique sociologique retenue ici, les pratiques des individus sont le produit de la rencontre contingente entre un habitus et une configuration sociale donnée. L'habitus est un « système de dispositions durables et transposables qui, intégrant toutes les expériences passées, fonctionne à chaque moment comme une matrice de perceptions, d'appréciations et d'actions » (Mérand et Pouliot 2008, 610). Le champ est un espace social structuré autour de relations de pouvoir, d'objets de lutte et de règles prises pour acquises (Pouliot 2008, 610). En ce qui a trait au premier de ces éléments, il implique une organisation hiérarchique du champ; les agents occupent des positions inégales et ces positions sont déterminées par les capitaux qu'ils possèdent. Le concept de capital renvoie aux ressources – de nature économique, politique, culturelle, symbolique ou autre – qui, en raison de l'évolution historique du champ, sont valorisées dans celui-ci (Williams 2007, 31). Deuxièmement, un champ est par définition le lieu d'un enjeu spécifique, qui est la raison pour laquelle les agents sont impliqués dans le champ et qui constitue leurs intérêts. Comme le souligne Williams, « il n'existe pas

d'intérêt générique ou ahistorique. Les intérêts sont plutôt toujours constitués au sein de champs spécifiques » (Williams 2007, 35). Enfin, le champ est organisé selon des règles prises pour acquises (la doxa), lesquelles englobent « l'ensemble des idées, normes et autres connaissances qui sont généralement acceptées comme évidentes à l'intérieur d'une situation sociale », tant par les agents qui dominent le champ que par ceux qui sont dominés (Mérand et Pouliot 2008, 611). Par ailleurs, les individus peuvent être impliqués dans une pluralité de champs (Adler et Bernstein 2005, 296); certains sont autonomes alors que d'autres « se chevauchent, s'interpénètrent, se déterminent mutuellement » (Mérand et Pouliot 2008, 616).

L'interaction entre un champ et un habitus détermine la « logique des pratiques » (ou sens pratique, sens du jeu). En d'autres termes, on ne peut postuler a priori que les agents agissent en fonction d'une rationalité instrumentale ou selon les normes d'une communauté; leurs pratiques dépendent toujours d'un contexte spécifique de positions et de dispositions. Le champ étant peuplé d'agents inégaux, ce sont les agents dominants qui imposent les pratiques constitutives du champ. Les autres agents, dont l'habitus ne concorde pas nécessairement avec celles-ci, peuvent donc avoir une moins bonne maîtrise du sens pratique (Pouliot 2008, 275-79). Ils doivent mettre en œuvre des stratégies pour renforcer leur position par rapport aux autres agents du champ. En ce sens, les stratégies sont des actes par lesquels ces derniers tentent consciemment d'agir différemment de ce que normalement, à travers l'habitus, ils feraient (Ekengren 2002, 106). Outre la mobilisation de stratégies, l'adaptation d'agents nouvellement intégrés à un champ peut reposer sur un apprentissage tacite, au fil de leur implication pratique

dans ce champ et, corollairement, au fil de leur exposition aux pratiques des agents dominants (Pouliot 2008).

Sur le plan institutionnel, l'adoption de nouvelles pratiques entraîne deux phénomènes, comme le souligne Neumann (2002): 1) « puisque la nouvelle pratique doit concorder avec d'autres pratiques déjà établies, celles-ci sont altérées : il y a des omissions, des ajouts et des créations »; 2) au fil de son institutionnalisation, la pratique est naturalisée, i.e. elle devient une pratique normale et évidente (Neumann 2002, 637).

Enfin, suivant tout ce qui précède, les représentations sociales, i.e. les concepts et les images partagées par un ensemble d'individus, sont produites et reproduites continuellement par la pratique dans un champ social donné (Mérand 2006, 131). Alors qu'une partie de l'école constructiviste tend à associer les représentations sociales à la collectivité que constitue l'État, il convient d'aller au-delà de cette vision *macro* en considérant les représentations unissant les membres d'une même organisation, qu'elle soit infra-étatique ou transnationale (Mérand 2006). Par ailleurs, comme le souligne Emanuel Adler, « les connaissances pratiques ne créent pas l'uniformité d'un groupe ou d'une communauté, mais organisent leurs différences autour de certaines compréhensions communes de la réalité » (Adler 2008, 202). La diversité des représentations sociales au sein d'un champ est tout à fait logique étant donné la pluralité de champs dans lesquels vivent les individus. Les pratiques qui unissent les acteurs du champ président certes au partage de certaines représentations sociales, mais au-delà de ce seuil minimal, les acteurs peuvent diverger sur un ensemble d'autres représentations (Mérand 2008a :13). En bout de ligne, ce qui unit les acteurs d'un

champ, c'est qu'ils « se reconnaissent comme faisant partie du même jeu : leurs interactions sont relativement routinières et ils ont une compréhension commune de ce qu'est le champ, ses règles, la hiérarchie des acteurs » (Mérand 2008b, 251).

Méthodologie

À partir de la perspective sociologique retenue, nous nous penchons donc, tel qu'indiqué en début d'introduction, sur les implications de l'intégration européenne pour la diplomatie autrichienne. La période considérée s'étend de 1987, année du début de la démarche d'adhésion à l'UE du gouvernement autrichien, à 2009. De plus, afin de mieux comprendre certains changements apportés par l'intégration européenne, ce mémoire retrace l'évolution historique de la diplomatie de l'Autriche - et de son gouvernement en général - de 1945 jusqu'au milieu des années 1980 (chapitre 1).

Le cas choisi est particulièrement intéressant considérant, notamment, la neutralité autrichienne; l'Autriche adhère à l'UE en 1995 en tant qu'État neutre, alors qu'à cette époque l'UE vient tout juste de créer la PESC et connaîtra, dans les quelques années suivantes, un développement accéléré dans ce domaine. Nous verrons, dans la partie empirique de ce mémoire, que cette situation a eu d'importantes implications pour la diplomatie autrichienne. Par ailleurs, la période relativement longue (15 ans) s'étant écoulée depuis l'accession de l'Autriche à l'UE nous permet d'en dégager les implications à plus long terme que si nous nous attardions, par exemple, aux diplomaties des États admis à l'UE en 2004 ou 2007. En même temps, le fait de se pencher sur un gouvernement devenu membre de l'UE relativement tard dans l'histoire de l'intégration européenne est utile pour évaluer les implications de celle-ci d'un point de vue social; en

effet, en tentant de comprendre comment les diplomates autrichiens ont vécu leur « entrée » dans un milieu déjà très institutionnalisé, les dynamiques sociales de ce milieu peuvent sans doute être mieux identifiées que si l'on s'attardait aux plus anciens membres de l'UE (e.g. France, Belgique).

Cherchant à comprendre l'action sociale « de l'intérieur » (Pouliot 2007), nous avons conduit, au cours des mois de juin et juillet 2009, 23 entretiens semi-dirigés avec des diplomates actuels ou retraités du ministère des Affaires étrangères autrichien (MAE)¹⁰. Un entretien a également été réalisé en mai 2009 avec un diplomate (impliqué dans les questions de sécurité) de la Représentation permanente de l'Autriche auprès de l'UE. Le recrutement des personnes interrogées s'est fait principalement par courriel, à partir des adresses électroniques des diverses sections administratives du MAE, tel qu'indiqué sur son site Internet. Au fil des interviews ainsi qu'à partir de recherches personnelles et des contacts professionnels établis progressivement à Vienne, nous avons pu recruter des diplomates retraités du MAE. Parmi nos répondants, huit étaient d'anciens diplomates, certains retraités très récemment.

De façon générale, nous avons utilisé deux principaux guides d'entretien: le premier pour les anciens diplomates, l'autre pour ceux en poste au moment de l'interview. Pour chacun de ces deux groupes, les entretiens ont été conduits à partir de questionnaires comportant, en général, un seuil minimal de questions communes (e.g. années d'expérience au MAE ; fréquence de communication avec les homologues européens). Cependant, dans la mesure du possible, les questionnaires ont été adaptés au

¹⁰ Les comptes rendus d'entretiens sont reproduits en annexe (Annexe II).

profil professionnel de chacun de nos interlocuteurs, tout en ciblant les mêmes sujets généraux ou dynamiques sociales (e.g. consultation des partenaires européens)¹¹. Par ailleurs, les interviews ont été réalisées en anglais (l'auteure de ce mémoire ne maîtrisant pas l'allemand) et ont duré entre 30 minutes et 1 h 30. Enfin, quatre entretiens ont également été menés à Vienne avec des spécialistes (politologues ou historiens) de la politique étrangère autrichienne ou de la diplomatie européenne.

Alors que nos entretiens nous ont fourni le point de vue subjectif des acteurs étudiés, nos recherches documentaires (sources secondaires en général) ont quant à elles permis d'objectiver les éléments de structure sociale à l'œuvre dans les pratiques diplomatiques autrichiennes et européennes (Pouliot 2007; Klotz et Lynch 2007).

Organisation du mémoire

Le premier chapitre de ce mémoire est consacré à la période précédant l'accession de l'Autriche à l'UE. Dans un premier temps, il relate d'un point de vue *macro* l'évolution du gouvernement autrichien sur le plan de sa politique étrangère et de ses liens avec l'Europe communautaire, de 1945 jusqu'au milieu des années 1980. Dans un second temps, il s'attarde aux implications de la démarche d'adhésion à l'UE de l'Autriche pour les pratiques et les représentations du MAE relativement à la politique de neutralité.

Les deuxième et troisième chapitres s'inscrivent tous deux dans la période allant de 1994/95 à 2009. Le chapitre 2 rend compte des implications, pour la diplomatie

¹¹ Hugh Gusterson (2008, 104) parle d'une stratégie de « branching » pour caractériser cette méthode

autrichienne, de ce que nous désignons comme le « champ communautaire », i.e. l'espace social dans lequel prend place la gestion des affaires (internes) relevant du premier pilier de l'UE. Le troisième et dernier chapitre porte quant à lui sur l'adaptation des diplomates et du MAE aux dynamiques du champ de la PESC.

Chapitre 1 – L’accession de l’Autriche à l’UE : genèse et stratégies relatives à la politique de neutralité (1987-1994)

Lorsque l’Autriche devient formellement membre de l’UE en janvier 1995, ses diplomates ont entamé depuis déjà quelques années un processus d’adaptation aux exigences et dynamiques de l’intégration européenne. L’un des principaux éléments de ce processus concerne le statut de neutralité de l’Autriche. Après un examen du contexte historique et de l’origine de la demande d’adhésion autrichienne à l’UE, nous nous attardons aux implications de la démarche d’accession pour les pratiques et les représentations des diplomates relativement à la neutralité de l’Autriche. Il apparaît que la marche vers Bruxelles des Autrichiens s’est accompagnée d’une redéfinition de la neutralité.

1. 1 Contexte historique et genèse de la demande d’adhésion à l’UE

L’Autriche moderne naît des ruines de l’Empire austro-hongrois, défait lors de la Première Guerre mondiale. La Première République autrichienne, proclamée le 12 novembre 1918, connaît toutefois une courte existence puisqu’elle est annexée en 1938 par l’Allemagne nazie (événement désigné comme l’Anschluss). Libérant l’Autriche du régime nazi au printemps 1945, les puissances alliées divisent le territoire autrichien et sa capitale, Vienne, en quatre zones d’occupation (américaine, soviétique, anglaise et française), tout en s’engageant au rétablissement d’une Autriche indépendante et démocratique. Un gouvernement national est formé en décembre 1945 – et la Deuxième République est alors créée¹² - après la tenue d’élections parlementaires en novembre

¹² La Seconde République autrichienne est en fait proclamée dès le 27 avril 1945 par le gouvernement national provisoire dirigé par Karl Renner (Weinzierl 1998, 17).

(Weinzierl 1998, 22-4)¹³. Ce gouvernement est toutefois étroitement contrôlé par le Conseil de contrôle allié établi en Autriche à partir de la mi-1945. Les puissances alliées ne parvenant pas à s'entendre sur les modalités juridiques de leur retrait du territoire autrichien¹⁴, l'occupation alliée se prolonge pendant plusieurs années, années pendant lesquelles l'Autriche se consolide comme démocratie libérale. Ce n'est qu'au printemps 1955 que sont conclues les négociations sur le traité d'État autrichien qui rétablit la pleine souveraineté de l'Autriche (Luif 2001, 131-2).

L'un des facteurs essentiels permettant la signature, en mai 1955, du traité d'État est l'engagement de l'Autriche à adopter un statut de neutralité « du même type que celui de la Suisse », tel que convenu dans le mémorandum austro-soviétique du 15 avril 1955 (Luif 2001, 133). La neutralité n'est toutefois pas incorporée comme obligation autrichienne dans le traité d'État; le contraire aurait conféré aux puissances alliées un droit de regard sur la mise en œuvre de la neutralité par Vienne, ce qui était inacceptable pour les Autrichiens (Luif 2001, 132). L'adoption de la neutralité est plutôt entérinée par une loi interne. Le 26 octobre 1955, peu après le départ du pays des derniers soldats alliés, le Parlement autrichien vote une loi constitutionnelle établissant la neutralité permanente de l'Autriche (Luif, 2001, 132). Selon l'article premier de cette loi :

(1) Pour affirmer son indépendance vers l'extérieur et l'inviolabilité de son territoire, l'Autriche déclare de son propre gré la neutralité

¹³ Lors de ces premières élections d'après-guerre, le Parti du Peuple autrichien (ÖVP) obtient 49,8% des votes, le Parti Socialiste (SPÖ) 44,6% et le Parti Communiste seulement 5% (Autriche, Parlement 2006, 114). Les trois partis forment un gouvernement de coalition le 20 décembre 1945 avec à sa tête le chancelier Leopold Figl (ÖVP).

¹⁴ Le fait que les Soviétiques lient leur retrait de l'Autriche à la résolution du problème allemand – notamment parce qu'ils craignent un nouvel Anschluss - nuit particulièrement à un accord rapide entre les Alliés (Luif 2001, 132). La question des propriétés allemandes en zone d'occupation soviétique s'avéra également l'une des questions les plus difficiles à résoudre entre l'Autriche et l'Union soviétique (Cede 1994, 185).

permanente, qu'elle maintiendra et défendra par tous les moyens disponibles.

(2) À cette fin, dans le futur, l'Autriche n'adhérera pas à une alliance militaire et n'autorisera pas l'établissement de bases militaires étrangères sur son territoire (Journal officiel de la République autrichienne, 1955/211, cité par Lange, 2006, 16).

Dès le lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'Autriche est politiquement et économiquement orientée à l'Ouest et ses dirigeants souhaitent participer aux divers projets de coopération multilatérale en Europe de l'Ouest et dans le monde (Kramer 1998, 164; Pelinka 2004, 210). Malgré l'opposition des Soviétiques, le gouvernement autrichien accepte le financement américain dans le cadre du Plan Marshall¹⁵ et il participe à la création de l'Organisation européenne de coopération économique (OECE) en 1948 (Angerer 2002, 35). Les Autrichiens deviennent également membres du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) et de la Banque internationale pour la reconstruction et le développement (BIRD) en 1948, ainsi que de l'Accord général sur les tarifs douaniers et le commerce (GATT) en 1951 (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 300). L'Autriche s'intéresse aussi au Conseil de l'Europe, mais faisant face aux menaces soviétiques de prolongation de l'occupation si elle se joint à cette organisation politique, elle se limite à y envoyer des observateurs (Angerer, 2002, 35). Elle joindra finalement le Conseil de l'Europe en avril 1956, après être également devenue membre de l'Organisation des Nations Unies (ONU) en décembre 1955 (Luif 2001, 134). En adhérant au Conseil de l'Europe et à l'ONU, l'Autriche se démarque clairement du modèle de neutralité appliqué par la Suisse, qui estime à l'époque que sa neutralité est incompatible avec le statut de membre de ces organisations politiques (Luif 2001, 134).

¹⁵ L'Autriche est non seulement l'unique pays sous occupation partielle de l'Union soviétique à recevoir des fonds du Plan Marshall, mais elle bénéficie également de l'allocation per capita la plus élevée parmi tous les pays bénéficiaires du Plan Marshall (Kramer 1998, 164).

Des négociations sont menées en 1954 avec la Communauté européenne de charbon et de l'acier (CECA) en vue d'obtenir un accord d'association avec celle-ci, mais elles échouent (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 304). Après l'obtention de l'indépendance en 1955, les dirigeants autrichiens songent cette fois à joindre la CECA comme membre à part entière (Luif 1995, 185). Mais lorsque se dessine le projet de marché commun entre la mi-1955 et 1957, le gouvernement autrichien renonce à y participer malgré l'invitation qui lui est lancée par Paul-Henri Spaak (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 305-6; Falkner 2001, 2). Pour les dirigeants autrichiens, l'agenda supranational de ce qui devient la Communauté économique européenne (CEE) en 1958 est incompatible avec la neutralité de l'Autriche. Divers facteurs sont à l'origine de cette décision, dont la volonté de ne pas provoquer le mécontentement de l'Union soviétique qui considère que l'adhésion de l'Autriche à la CEE contreviendrait à l'interdiction, en vertu de l'article 4 du traité d'État, de tout rattachement à l'Allemagne (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 306; Cede 1994). À l'origine de l'exclusion autrichienne de la CEE se trouvent également des facteurs internes, dont le protectionnisme et la volonté d'une partie de l'élite politique (en particulier les Socialistes) de garder le contrôle sur l'important secteur nationalisé de l'économie nationale (Angerer 2002, 36). En outre, ayant tout juste retrouvé leur pleine souveraineté, les Autrichiens sont peu enthousiastes à l'idée de s'engager dans un processus de délégation d'autonomie politique (Angerer 2005, 447). Sur le plan identitaire, le « traumatisme » de l'Anschluss joue un rôle non seulement pour l'Union soviétique, mais également pour une partie de l'élite politique autrichienne; dans l'après-guerre, les Autrichiens cherchent à « dé-germaniser » leur identité et sont soucieux de se

distancier de l'Allemagne (Angerer 2005, 448). Or, joindre la CEE équivaldrait à leurs yeux à la poursuite du rattachement identitaire avec celle-ci.

Si l'Autriche renonce à l'intégration communautaire, elle accueille néanmoins très favorablement vers 1956-1957 la suggestion britannique - destinée initialement à contrer le projet de marché commun - de créer une grande zone de libre-échange européenne. Le gouvernement autrichien participe donc à la création de l'Association européenne de libre-échange (AELE) en 1959, tout en croyant, comme les Britanniques, que cette nouvelle organisation sera en mesure de faire pression sur la CEE pour que soit fondée une AELE rassemblant tous les membres de l'OECE (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 307). Mais dès l'automne 1961, lorsque cette perspective échoue avec la demande d'adhésion à la CEE de la Grande-Bretagne, l'Autriche demande, avec la Suède et la Suisse, une association économique à la CEE en vertu de l'article 238 du traité de Rome (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 310-11). Après l'échec de cette demande en 1963, les Autrichiens sollicitent - seuls cette fois - l'ouverture de nouvelles négociations qui dureront quatre ans mais qui se solderont encore une fois par un échec¹⁶ (Luif 1995, 186). Ce n'est qu'en 1972 que l'Autriche parvient à conclure, comme la Suisse, la Suède, le Portugal et l'Islande, des accords de libre-échange avec la Communauté européenne (CE)¹⁷, accords excluant les produits agricoles et la possibilité de participer aux décisions communautaires (Angerer 2005, 452; Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 313)¹⁸.

¹⁶ Trois raisons principales sont à l'origine de cet échec : l'opposition italienne à la candidature autrichienne en raison des problèmes de ces deux pays relativement à la région du Tyrol; l'opposition soviétique à un rapprochement entre l'Autriche et les Communautés ; et l'objection française, basée notamment sur le désir de ménager les susceptibilités des Soviétiques (Entretiens 16, 20).

¹⁷ Les exécutifs de la CEE et de la CECA sont fusionnés en 1967, ce qui nous amène à employer le terme générique de Communauté européenne (CE), conformément à l'usage courant.

¹⁸ Selon l'accord de libre-échange conclu en 1972, tous les tarifs sur les produits industriels échangés entre la CE et l'Autriche doivent être abolis avant 1977 (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 313). Soulignons que, contrairement à l'accord recherché par l'Autriche dans les années 1960 (union douanière *de facto*),

Toutes ces tentatives de rapprochement envers la CE étaient promues surtout par les partisans du Parti du Peuple autrichien (ÖVP) (Luif 1995, 187)¹⁹.

De 1970 à 1983, sous le règne du chancelier Bruno Kreisky (Parti socialiste - SPÖ), la politique étrangère autrichienne se détache quelque peu de l'Europe pour s'attarder davantage à des enjeux globaux (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 6). Pouvant s'appuyer sur une grande popularité nationale et sur des majorités absolues au Parlement, Kreisky dispose de la liberté nécessaire pour mettre en œuvre une politique étrangère ambitieuse, basée sur le rôle de l'Autriche comme promotrice de la détente entre l'Est et l'Ouest et intermédiaire entre ces deux blocs (Luif 2001, 138). Cette politique dite de « neutralité active » amène notamment Kreisky à se proposer comme médiateur dans le conflit israélo-palestinien (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 7). De façon plus importante, l'Autriche s'implique activement, au sein du Groupe des pays neutres et non alignés (Groupe N+N), dans la préparation et le suivi de la Conférence sur la sécurité et la coopération en Europe (CSCE) (Neuhold, 1987). Le groupe N+N performe dans ce contexte diverses tâches d'intermédiaire (e.g. propositions de compromis; présidence des réunions) dont le but est de favoriser le consensus entre les deux blocs (Neuhold 1987, 27). Par-dessus tout, la « période Kreisky » est caractérisée par la grande importance de l'ONU dans la politique étrangère autrichienne. Les forces armées autrichiennes participent activement aux opérations de maintien de la paix des Nations Unies (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 7). Les diplomates, quant à eux, président d'importantes commissions onusiennes (e.g. Comité des utilisations pacifiques de l'espace extra-atmosphérique) et

l'accord de 1972 préserve les pouvoirs de l'Autriche de conclure des traités commerciaux avec des États tiers (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 313).

¹⁹ Selon un ancien diplomate impliqué à cette époque dans les négociations de l'Autriche avec la CE (et manifestement partisan de l'ÖVP): "the People's Party was always more European and very pro-West and

l'un d'entre eux, Kurt Waldheim, occupe le poste de Secrétaire général de 1972 à 1981 (Kramer 1998, 167-8). Kreisky fait également de Vienne le troisième siège de l'ONU.

En somme, dans les années 1970, l'Autriche joue « un rôle diplomatique international en dehors de toute proportion avec sa taille, la force de son économie ou son importance stratégique » (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 314). De même, elle jouit à cette époque d'une image très positive à l'étranger, ce qui marque une évolution remarquable avec l'immédiat après-guerre (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 6). L'ancien Secrétaire d'État américain Henry Kissinger décrit d'ailleurs Kreisky en ces termes : « a shrewd and perceptive chancellor, who had parlayed his country's formal neutrality into a position of influence beyond its strength » (Kissinger 1979, 1204, cité dans Kramer 1998, 169). La stature politique ainsi que la prospérité que connaît alors l'Autriche contribuent considérablement à la popularité de la neutralité auprès des Autrichiens et à son association étroite à l'indépendance²⁰ du pays (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 6; Entretien 19). La neutralité devient progressivement un élément clé de l'identité nationale autrichienne (Wodak et Kovacs 2004, 218; Angerer 2005, 448). Le jour de l'adoption de la loi sur la neutralité, le 26 octobre, est d'ailleurs choisi comme jour de fête nationale en 1967 (Angerer 2005, 448).

Les années 1980 et le changement de direction politique

À partir du début des années 1980, le gouvernement Kreisky est confronté à un environnement international plus difficile. Le conflit Est-Ouest connaît un regain de

so on, and we were very much interested to get closer to the EC" (Entretien 16).

²⁰ Lors d'un entretien, un diplomate souligne d'ailleurs : « We developed from the start a kind of Austrian model of neutrality...we saw it as a different expression for independence » (Entretien 26).

tensions, ce qui diminue la marge de manœuvre pour mener une politique de neutralité active (Kramer 1998, 170). Sur la scène intérieure, la politique étrangère de Kreisky est de plus en plus critiquée par l'opposition conservatrice pour le peu d'attention accordée à l'Europe de l'Ouest (Luif 1995, 188). Le SPÖ perd sa majorité absolue lors des élections générales de 1983, entraînant peu après la démission de Kreisky comme chef de ce parti. De 1983 à 1986, le gouvernement autrichien (formé d'une coalition entre le SPÖ et le Parti de la liberté autrichien - FPÖ) entame un processus de redirection de la politique étrangère en se souciant davantage des relations avec l'Europe de l'Ouest et en adoptant une approche plus modeste au Moyen-Orient et dans les forums multilatéraux (Kramer 1998, 170; Luif 1995, 188).

Après les élections générales de novembre 1986, une coalition entre le SPÖ et l'ÖVP prend le pouvoir avec Franz Vranitzky (SPÖ) comme chancelier. Alois Mock (ÖVP), ministre des Affaires étrangères de ce nouveau gouvernement, poursuit le changement déjà entamé en faveur d'une politique plus modeste et met résolument l'accent sur l'Europe, en particulier sur la CE (Kramer 1998, 170). Le 28 janvier 1987, à l'occasion d'un discours devant le Conseil national²¹, Vranitzky déclare que l'intensification des relations de l'Autriche avec la CE est un « objectif central » de sa politique étrangère (Luif 2001, 142). Au cours d'un entretien avec l'ancien ambassadeur Manfred Scheich, celui-ci évoque un souvenir révélateur de l'orientation communautaire envisagée par le gouvernement autrichien dès janvier 1987 :

I took over the directory for Economic and European affairs in the foreign ministry – and I was walking there and I met Vranitzky, who was the new

²¹ Le Conseil national (*Nationalrat*) est la chambre basse et la plus importante du Parlement (Luif 1995, 197).

Chancellor. He said: “come to my office one of these days”. So I called, I got a *rendez-vous*, I think it was the 17 of January 1987, and I hardly sat down and... then he turned to me and said: “Don't you think that, finally, we should be a member of the European Community, with some sort of neutrality reservation?”²² (Entretien 25)

Toujours est-il qu'en 1987, l'approche officielle poursuivie par le gouvernement ne vise pas l'adhésion complète à la CE mais consiste plutôt en une « approche globale » visant la participation de l'Autriche aux quatre libertés du marché unique (Falkner 2001, 2; Entretien 25).

Un ensemble de conditions favorisent le changement d'orientation de l'Autriche en faveur d'un rapprochement avec la CE, puis d'une demande d'adhésion (Angerer 2005, 455). D'abord, en juin 1985, la Commission européenne dévoile son Livre blanc sur l'achèvement du marché unique, proposant un programme détaillé pour l'atteinte de cet objectif au plus tard en 1992 (Luif 2001, 141). L'essentiel des propositions de la Commission est entériné par l'Acte unique européen, signé en février 1986 par les États membres de la CE. L'achèvement du marché commun fait peser le risque d'un désavantage économique considérable pour l'Autriche si elle en demeure exclue, puisqu'elle est hautement dépendante de la CE pour son commerce (Gehler et Kaiser 2002, 315 ; Vranitzky 1992)²³.

Alors que l'intégration communautaire connaît une relance, l'économie autrichienne est en difficulté; le chômage (quasi-inexistant pendant deux décennies) est en croissance et l'industrie nationalisée est en crise (Angerer 2005, 456; Luif 1995, 188-

²² Tous les extraits d'entretiens retranscrits dans ce mémoire le sont dans la langue où l'interview a été menée.

²³ Dans la seconde moitié des années 1980, environ 60% des exportations autrichiennes sont destinées à la

9). Dans ce contexte, une partie de l'élite économique et politique du pays commence à considérer sérieusement l'adhésion de l'Autriche à la CE en guise de solution aux problèmes économiques (Lehne 1992, 205). Parallèlement, à partir de 1985, une série de scandales politiques a pour effet de miner l'image internationale de l'Autriche et d'engendrer un déclin de la confiance des Autrichiens en leur pays (Kramer 1998, 171; Luif 1995, 189)²⁴. Par ailleurs, la politique de détente menée par l'Union soviétique à l'époque crée une « fenêtre d'opportunité » (Entretien 25), Moscou apparaissant désormais peu encline à objecter une résistance fondamentale à l'adhésion de l'Autriche à la CE (Entretiens 18, 19, 25, 26; Lehne 1992, 202).

En mai puis en décembre 1987, les grands groupes d'intérêt autrichiens (la Fédération des industrialistes et la Chambre de commerce fédérale) réclament formellement l'adhésion à la CE (Luif 2001, 142). Ils sont suivis par l'ÖVP en janvier 1988. Après plusieurs mois de débats à l'échelle nationale, le SPÖ approuve finalement la demande d'adhésion en avril 1989, en posant comme condition le maintien de la neutralité (Luif 1995, 196). En juin 1989 une forte majorité parlementaire²⁵ donne le mandat au gouvernement d'entamer des négociations avec la CE. La lettre officielle de demande d'adhésion est soumise à Bruxelles le 17 juillet 1989 (Falkner 2001, 3).

CE (Luif 1995, 182/234), ce qui en fait l'une des plus fortes concentrations parmi les membres de l'AELE.

²⁴ Parmi les scandales en cause, soulignons l'affaire Reder qui éclate en janvier 1985, lorsque le ministre de la défense, Walter Reder, accueille un ancien criminel nazi de retour en Autriche. Un autre scandale, qui aura des conséquences négatives sur une plus longue période, découle des révélations sur le rôle de Kurt Waldheim, élu président de la République en juin 1986, aux côtés des Nazis lors de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale (Kramer 1998, 171-2).

²⁵ Outre l'ÖVP et le SPÖ, le FPÖ appuie fortement l'adhésion à l'UE dès 1987 (au cours des années 1990, toutefois, il change de camp en devenant très critique de l'intégration européenne) (Luif 1995, 191). Les Verts s'opposent quant à eux à l'intégration dans la CE/UE.

1.2 Le ministère des Affaires étrangères autrichien et la question de la neutralité dans le processus d'adhésion à la CE/UE

Face à l'enjeu central que devient l'adhésion à la CE dans l'arène politique nationale à la fin des années 1980, une partie du ministère des Affaires étrangères (MAE) autrichien est plutôt mal à l'aise (Entretiens 6, 17, 18, 20, 25, 26). Abondant en ce sens, un diplomate devenu politicien au cours des années 1980 et comptant parmi les membres du SPÖ en faveur de l'adhésion affirme :

The foreign ministry was hesitant at the beginning. I remember... when I was member of Parliament, I was the first social-democrat with some political standing who publicly talked about the possibility of joining the EU. I did not say "let's do it next year, but I said, the nature of the EC has changed, it's now a much more open and pluralistic thing, East-West relations are showing signs of détente, so we could perhaps consider that". At that time, this was 1984 or 85, there was quite an outcry in the foreign ministry: "no no, we can never do that, we have to stay as we are and develop some kind of bilateral relationships with the EC", like today Switzerland... Because there was a kind of dogma in the foreign ministry that a neutral country cannot join the EC, because it gives up too much of its sovereignty. The EC could for instance take a decision to boycott trade with the USSR or the Eastern bloc and Austria could never follow such a thing. ... there was a certain dogmatic position and it took a little while... (Entretien 26)

Un ancien conseiller juridique du MAE explique quant à lui :

After 1955 and then in the 1960's, 1970's, the consensual doctrine in Austria – and this was a consensus among all the parties – was that Austria could not become member of the European Communities, because it was incompatible with our neutrality. Nobody doubted that, it was a very firm, clear principle of foreign relations. Now in the 1980's... a section of the Austrian economy started to put this doctrine into question. We still upheld at the legal office, because we were the guardians of Austrian neutrality, the view that we cannot become a member of the EC because it's incompatible with our neutrality. (Entretien 17)

L'interprétation selon laquelle la neutralité était incompatible avec l'intégration à la CE avait été défendue dès la fin des années 1950 par la grande majorité des juristes

autrichiens, sur la base notamment des dispositions des traités de Rome sur les sanctions économiques contre des États tiers (Neuhold 1994, 24 ; Lange 2006, 37 ; Luif 1995, 192). Ce jugement avait été d'autant plus influent au sein du MAE que les juristes – i.e. le département de droit international²⁶ - en constituaient en quelque sorte l'élite depuis la création du MAE en 1959 (Entretiens 11, 17). En d'autres termes, le « capital juridique » était particulièrement valorisé au sein du ministère, le droit international jouant un rôle très important dans la politique étrangère autrichienne (Entretiens 11, 17, 18, 19). Bref, l'idée de l'incompatibilité entre l'adhésion à la CE et la neutralité avait été naturalisée au sein du MAE, en particulier au sein des départements de droit international et des affaires politiques (Entretiens 11, 17, 18, 25, 26).

Ainsi, lorsqu'à partir du milieu des années 1980, le projet d'intégrer la CE est discuté par certains acteurs économiques et politiques, plusieurs au sein du MAE manifestent leur opposition. Outre l'idée d'incompatibilité que nous venons d'évoquer, il semble que d'autres considérations jouent également un rôle dans l'attitude réfractaire d'une partie du MAE. Scheich souligne, par exemple, la crainte qui lui a été exprimée par un membre de la section politique relativement à l'impact de l'intégration dans la CE pour la politique autrichienne aux Nations Unies : « We will loose our playground in the UN », aurait-il fait valoir (Entretien 25). En revanche, la section économique du ministère compte parmi les promoteurs de l'adhésion à la CE (Entretiens 20, 25). La démarche d'accession implique donc en premier lieu un débat au sein du MAE, comme en témoigne cette citation :

²⁶ De plus, ce département entretenait une grande proximité avec le Centre de droit international de l'Université de Vienne (Entretien 11).

In the foreign ministry you had two different groupings: the first grouping was in the Economic DG, where I was; we said there's a need to join, for economic reasons. If we don't join, Austria will slowly fall back economically, it will be more difficult to bring the Austrian products to the EU market and slowly we will go the Yugoslav way. Whereas in the political department, "no no, neutrality is such an important thing, this is a new, a kind of "Ersatz Religion", religion of Austria you know... now we're not anymore Germany and neutrality makes it different..." So there were different groupings in the foreign ministry, yes this is true. We had long internal discussions... (Entretien 20)

Le département juridique du MAE signale finalement son appui en 1989 à la demande d'accession de l'Autriche à la CE, tout en recommandant, comme le SPÖ, une réserve à celle-ci afin d'assurer le respect de la neutralité (Falkner 2001, 3). Conformément à cette recommandation, le gouvernement autrichien formule la réserve suivante dans sa lettre adressée à la CE en juillet 1989²⁷:

L'Autriche suppose, avec cette demande d'adhésion, que son statut internationalement reconnu de neutralité permanente (...) soit respecté; que, en tant que membre des Communautés européennes (...) elle sera en mesure de remplir les obligations juridiques découlant de son statut de neutralité permanente et de poursuivre sa politique de neutralité comme contribution spécifique à la garantie de la paix et de la sécurité en Europe. (cité dans Lange 2006, 42)

Selon l'argument développé par les juristes du MAE, cette réserve entre dans le champ d'application des clauses de dérogation du traité de la CE, en particulier l'article 224, lequel permet d'éventuelles exceptions aux règles communautaires dans le cas où un État membre est appelé à prendre des mesures en vue du maintien de la paix et de la sécurité internationale (Lange 2006, 48 ; Lantis et Queen 1998, 169-70). Cet argument ne prend toutefois en compte que les aspects économiques de l'intégration. En ce qui

²⁷ L'ÖVP aurait préféré ne pas inclure cette réserve dans la demande d'adhésion; son inclusion résulte d'une concession faite au SPÖ (Luif 1995, 198).

concerne la Coopération politique européenne (CPE, introduite en 1986 dans l'Acte unique européen), le MAE la juge compatible avec la neutralité puisqu'elle n'englobe aucun aspect militaire et fonctionne selon le vote à l'unanimité au Conseil (Lange 2006, 42). Tout indique que les implications politiques à long terme de l'intégration européenne sont peu considérées par le MAE et que celui-ci se concentre sur les aspects économiques de l'intégration (Lange 2006, 43; Luif 1995, 242/316). Au printemps 1989, le chef du Comité de politique étrangère du Parlement – ce diplomate devenu politicien, tel qu'indiqué plus tôt - déclare d'ailleurs à un journaliste: « We don't believe in the rhetoric of European Political Union. It's in total contradiction to the deep-seated sense of European identity. We will insist on maintaining neutrality » (Protzman 1989).

Malgré tout, le dépôt de la demande d'adhésion à la CE marque une première étape dans l'évolution des pratiques et des représentations du MAE relativement à la politique de neutralité. Ce qui était auparavant inconcevable, i.e. que l'Autriche neutre fasse partie de la CE, entre, sous la pression des divers acteurs de la politique autrichienne, dans l'univers du possible. Si cette amorce de changement résulte largement de dynamiques nationales (i.e. le MAE évolue sous la pression d'acteurs *nationaux*), l'évolution subséquente de ces pratiques et représentations sera engendrée en grande partie par le jeu des relations entre le gouvernement autrichien et les acteurs de la CE/UE²⁸.

²⁸ L'Union européenne (UE) entre en vigueur le 1^{er} novembre 1993.

Réception de la demande autrichienne au sein de la CE et première redéfinition de la neutralité

La demande d'adhésion de l'Autriche reçoit un accueil pour le moins mitigé de la part des États membres de la CE et de la Commission européenne (Luif 1995; Lemaitre 1989; Entretiens 6, 25). À titre d'exemple, un article du *New York Times* parle d'une « réception glaciale » (Protzman 1989). Du point de vue du directeur de la section économique du MAE à l'époque : « They were not all too happy. They were not, I can tell you, it was an uphill battle for us » (Entretien 25). Pour plusieurs acteurs de la CE, celle-ci doit se concentrer sur l'achèvement du marché commun et les préparatifs en vue du traité sur l'Union européenne (TUE) avant de songer à un élargissement. En guise d'alternative à l'adhésion, le président de la Commission, Jacques Delors, propose la mise en place d'un partenariat plus étroit entre l'AELE et la CE : l'Espace économique européen (EEE) (Neuhold 1994, 13). Le gouvernement autrichien participera aux négociations de cet arrangement jusqu'à la signature du traité de Porto en 1992, sans toutefois abandonner sa demande d'adhésion. Celle-ci demeure l'objectif ultime de la politique étrangère autrichienne jusqu'à l'obtention de l'accession en 1994 (Entretiens 6, 20).

À long terme, i.e. jusqu'en 1994, la principale difficulté à laquelle se heurte le gouvernement autrichien concerne la neutralité (Entretien 25; Lantis et Queen 1998, 169). Pour ceux, tels les gouvernements du *Benelux*, qui attachent une importance particulière au développement d'une politique étrangère et de sécurité commune, la neutralité constituerait un obstacle à une telle politique. En juillet 1989, le ministre des Affaires étrangères belge bloque d'ailleurs une réponse immédiate à la demande

autrichienne, souhaitant voir l'Autriche adopter une neutralité « plus flexible » et allant jusqu'à suggérer que la CE consulte l'Union soviétique à ce sujet (Luif 1995, 198). Après plusieurs jours de discussions au sein du Conseil, la demande autrichienne est finalement transmise à la Commission pour que celle-ci formule son opinion, conformément au processus d'adhésion habituel. Cet avis ne viendra toutefois pas avant l'été 1991, notamment en raison des désaccords des Commissaires à l'endroit de la candidature autrichienne (Luif 1995, 239).

Entre-temps, le MAE mène une opération de relations publiques pour accélérer le traitement de sa demande et contrer le malaise d'une partie de la CE à l'endroit de la neutralité autrichienne (e.g. aide-mémoire adressé à la CE en février 1990; discours et lobbying dans les capitales européennes; Entretiens 9, 17). Le MAE réitère « la contribution à la sauvegarde de la paix et de la sécurité en Europe » que représente la neutralité (Mission autrichienne auprès de la CE 1990). La nature autodéterminée de celle-ci (la neutralité résultant d'une loi interne) est également mise en évidence face à l'interprétation dont elle fait l'objet dans certaines capitales et certains médias européens (e.g. discours de Scheich à Paris, mai 1990).

Peu à peu, avec la fin progressive de la guerre froide et en particulier dans le contexte de la guerre du Golfe, d'août 1990 à décembre 1991, la neutralité est remise en question comme contribution à la paix et à la sécurité internationale (Lange 2006, 29; Lehne 1992 ; Vranitzky 1992). Le MAE et la chancellerie mettent plutôt l'accent sur l'importance de la « solidarité internationale », tout en présentant ce « devoir de solidarité » comme un élément compatible avec la neutralité (d'après les discours

relevés par Lange 2006, 30-1). Face aux sanctions adoptées par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU contre l'Irak dès le mois d'août 1990, le gouvernement autrichien est pour une première fois confronté à la possibilité de participer à des sanctions internationales en vertu du chapitre VII de la Charte des Nations Unies (Alecu de Flers 2007, 239). Le gouvernement, qui au demeurant occupe un siège non permanent au Conseil de sécurité à partir de janvier 1991, choisit de participer aux sanctions économiques contre Bagdad et permet aux États-Unis et à leurs alliés de transporter du matériel de guerre à travers le territoire autrichien (Kramer 1998, 173). Cette situation amène l'unité juridique du MAE à renverser la doctrine, appliquée depuis 1995, selon laquelle la neutralité doit avoir préséance sur la Charte de l'ONU (Lange 2006, 34; Luif 1995, 267). Comme l'indique un diplomate affecté au département de droit international à l'époque :

[...] suddenly in 1990-91, it was quite clear that Austria would have to really find its position as a neutral country in the context of the United Nations... and we redefined and rewrote our legal doctrine about neutrality, saying that whenever there's an internationally agreed military action, being either by the UN – at that time we said only by the UN... – that this is not a war in the sense of neutrality law and therefore neutrality does not apply. (Entretien 17)

Plus largement, les sanctions décidées par l'ONU n'entrent plus dans le champ d'application de la neutralité à partir de janvier 1991 (Lange 2006, 34). Ce changement peut difficilement être considéré en isolation de la demande d'adhésion autrichienne à la CE, comme l'ont remarqué plusieurs commentateurs (e.g. Lange 2006, 32; Alecu de Flers 2007, 239). En effet, si la modification de la politique de neutralité en 1991 s'inscrit dans un contexte dépassant celui de l'adhésion, elle semble néanmoins destinée en partie à signaler aux gouvernements de la CE que l'Autriche est prête à faire preuve de « solidarité » dans le cadre de la coopération politique européenne (Lange 2006, 239 ;

Alecu de Flers 2007, 239). La guerre du Golfe se conjugue donc à l'objectif de l'intégration européenne comme incitatifs à une première redéfinition de la neutralité.

Stratégies autrichiennes suivant l'avis de la Commission

Deux ans après sa demande d'adhésion, le gouvernement autrichien reçoit finalement l'avis²⁹ de la Commission le 1er août 1991. Cette dernière confirme que la neutralité permanente de l'Autriche pose quelques problèmes, bien que, du seul point de vue économique, la demande autrichienne devrait être acceptée (Luif 1995, 239). La neutralité est d'abord problématique au regard des dispositions des traités communautaires sur les sanctions économiques; celles-ci sont incompatibles avec le devoir de traitement égal d'un État neutre (Lange 2006, 46). La Commission rejette donc la possibilité de considérer la neutralité comme une contribution à la paix et la sécurité en vertu de l'article 224 du traité de la CE (Luif 1995, 240). En outre, l'avis signale que la neutralité autrichienne soulèverait certains problèmes si, comme prévu, les États membres s'engageaient dans le développement d'une politique étrangère et de sécurité commune (PESC) (Phinnemore 2000, 206). À cet égard, l'avis stipule que l'acceptation de l'Autriche dans la CE devrait être conditionnelle à l'obtention de « garanties spécifiques de la part des autorités autrichiennes concernant leur capacité juridique de remplir les obligations découlant de la future politique étrangère et de sécurité commune » (Commission européenne 1992, p. 18, cité dans Luif 1995, 239). Enfin, la

²⁹ L'avis de la Commission constitue une étape clé du processus d'accession d'un futur État membre, mais cette opinion n'engage pas juridiquement le Conseil, qui lui seul décide à l'unanimité d'ouvrir les négociations d'adhésion avec un candidat (Sedelmeier 2010, 418).

Commission suggère, à titre de solution aux problèmes présentés par la neutralité, que l'Autriche redéfinisse sa politique à cet égard (Luif 1995, 240)³⁰.

L'avis de la Commission confronte le MAE à la nécessité d'accentuer ses efforts pour faire apparaître la neutralité comme compatible avec l'intégration européenne. Comme l'indique le conseiller juridique du MAE à cette époque : « We had to develop a strategy which made the goal of membership compatible with neutrality » (Entretien 18). Dans un premier temps, le MAE abandonne pratiquement toute référence à la neutralité et insiste dans des mémorandums et déclarations adressées à la CE, sur l'engagement de l'Autriche à participer « à la création et au fonctionnement d'un futur système de sécurité européen » (MAE 1991, cité dans Lange 2006, 48; Phinnemore 2000, 207). Après le Conseil européen de Maastricht (décembre 1991) et la signature du TUE en février 1992, le MAE analyse attentivement les dispositions du titre V (PESC) et conclut à la possibilité de garantir la participation de l'Autriche à la PESC malgré la neutralité du pays (Lange 2006 ; Entretien 20). Diverses considérations sous-tendent ce jugement, dont le fait que la PESC est régie par un système de décision intergouvernemental (Lange 2006, 49). De plus, bien que le TUE souligne la possibilité future d'une défense commune (article J.4§2)³¹, l'article J.4§4 spécifie que la PESC « n'affecte pas le

³⁰ Une autre solution évoquée par la Commission est que les États membres consentent à accorder à l'Autriche une interprétation favorable de l'article 224. Par ailleurs, dans un rapport subséquent sur la question de l'élargissement (*L'Europe et le défi de son élargissement*, 24 juin 1992), la Commission témoigne d'une attitude plus intransigeante à l'endroit de la neutralité, bien que celle-ci ne soit pas mentionnée explicitement: « Un pays candidat dont les dispositions constitutionnelles ou sa position dans les relations internationales empêcheraient de poursuivre le projet [d'une politique étrangère et de sécurité commune] dans lequel les autres membres sont engagés, ne saurait être intégré dans l'union de façon satisfaisante. Il sera nécessaire d'écarter toute ambiguïté ou malentendu sur ce point, dans le cadre de l'élargissement. ...il faut être clair vis-à-vis des pays demandeurs. Ceux-ci devront fournir des assurances spécifiques et contraignantes en ce qui concerne leur engagement politique et leur capacité juridique à remplir leurs obligations [dans le cadre de la PESC] ».

³¹ L'article J.4§1 stipule : « La politique étrangère et de sécurité commune inclut l'ensemble des questions

caractère spécifique de la politique de sécurité et de défense de certains États membres » (traité de Maastricht, article J.4)³². Cela offre théoriquement une possibilité de dérogation à d'éventuelles mesures incompatibles avec la neutralité. En outre, du point de vue autrichien, il est fort peu probable que se développe, à court ou moyen terme, une défense européenne étant donné l'opposition du Royaume-Uni à cet égard (Ferreira-Pereira 2005, 5). Le gouvernement autrichien déclare donc, en juin 1992, dans un nouveau mémorandum à la CE, que « L'Autriche s'identifie entièrement avec les objectifs de la PESC et participera à cette politique et à son développement dynamique, dans un esprit de solidarité » (Autriche 1992, cité dans Luif 1995, 241).

Le Conseil européen de Lisbonne (juin 1992) conclut que les négociations d'adhésion de l'Autriche – et de la Finlande, la Norvège et la Suède³³ – pourraient commencer dès que le TUE serait ratifié par tous les États membres (Luif 1995, 303). Le processus est finalement quelque peu accéléré, de sorte que les négociations s'ouvriront le 1^{er} février 1993. Malgré ces développements, le gouvernement autrichien continue à être confronté à la méfiance de certains États membres devant sa neutralité. Le président français déclare d'ailleurs, en décembre 1992, que la compatibilité de la neutralité avec l'adhésion à l'UE serait l'enjeu principal des négociations avec l'Autriche, mais que cela était « un problème pour eux, pas pour nous » (cité dans Luif 1995, 303).

relatives à la sécurité de l'Union européenne, y compris la définition à terme d'une politique de défense commune, qui pourrait conduire, le moment venu, à une défense commune ».

³² Cette disposition du TUE est communément désignée comme la « clause irlandaise » puisqu'elle a été incluse dans le traité à la demande de l'Irlande, également neutre militairement (Ferreira-Pereira 2005, 5).

³³ Ces États, membres de l'AELE, ont soumis leur demande d'adhésion à la suite de l'Autriche, entre juillet 1991 et novembre 1992 (Luif 1995, 217-33).

Il faut souligner qu'en dépit des pressions exercées sur lui, le gouvernement autrichien ne procède pas à l'abandon de la neutralité étant donné l'opposition du SPÖ (et des Verts) à cet égard et la grande popularité de la neutralité auprès des citoyens (Luif 1995, 241 ; Lehne 1992, 205-6)³⁴. Selon un spécialiste de la politique étrangère autrichienne, à l'époque (et encore aujourd'hui; voir chapitre 3), « la meilleure façon de commettre un suicide politique aurait été d'abolir la neutralité » (Entretien 2). À l'approche des négociations d'accession, la neutralité est cependant redéfinie de façon restreinte, en fonction des éléments militaires fondamentaux découlant de la loi de 1955, soit : la non-participation à des guerres, la non-participation à une alliance militaire et la prohibition de bases militaires étrangères en Autriche (Entretiens 2, 7, 20, 25). Les diplomates autrichiens sont ainsi en mesure d'argumenter, face à leurs homologues de l'UE, qu'aucun de ces éléments n'est contraire aux dispositions du TUE, comme l'indique l'ancien ambassadeur Scheich :

We said to the Union, when the negotiations were on the way ... in a somewhat new fashion, but it's gymnastics of words... we said three things: neutrality means we don't participate in wars; Austria will not be a member of a military alliance; and Austria will not have foreign military basis on its territory. ... None of these things is in the Union treaties; the Union is not a military alliance and nobody is asking us to participate in a war. So, what do you want? This was our position. And with this position we actually finally made it. There were certain... the question of over flights, you know...oh let's no go into these details... this is all, I would say, diplomatic and international law acrobatics! But neutrality was defined in a new way with these three points: ... That's how it went. This was an ongoing process. Neutrality played a role until the very end you know. The Union, or some member states, wanted more assurances, not only such general ones, you know... But it was all settled. This is a process which lasted over years. (Entretien 25)

³⁴ En comparaison, la Suède et la Finlande abandonnent formellement leur neutralité en 1992 et adoptent la non-alliance (Lange 2006, 69). Par ailleurs, une majorité d'Autrichiens accordent à l'époque (de 1988 à 1993) une plus grande importance à la neutralité qu'à l'adhésion à l'UE (Luif 1995, 243).

Lors des négociations d'accession sur le chapitre de la PESC, certains États membres souhaitent obtenir un engagement écrit d'une grande portée de la part des candidats, en particulier de l'Autriche. D'autres, comme la Grande-Bretagne, rejettent cette idée et estiment que l'importance de la neutralité doit être diminuée (Luif 1995, 309). Le compromis trouvé par les Douze consiste finalement à faire signer aux quatre candidats une déclaration commune, annexée au traité d'accession, dans laquelle ils confirment leur engagement à participer pleinement et activement à la PESC et à reprendre entièrement et *sans réserve* tous les objectifs du traité de Maastricht concernant la PESC (Luif 1995, 310). La déclaration précise également que les nouveaux États membres adapteront leur cadre juridique en conformité avec l'acquis politique, une disposition qui cible directement l'Autriche (Luif 1995, 310).

Après la signature de l'acte d'accession en juin 1994, le gouvernement autrichien introduit un nouvel article constitutionnel (l'article 23f) qui spécifie que l'Autriche participe à la PESC, y compris aux mesures de sanctions économiques de l'UE contre un ou des États tiers (Luif 1995, 334). La définition restreinte de la neutralité évoquée précédemment est donc entérinée, mais rien ne spécifie jusqu'où l'Autriche pourrait aller dans le cadre de la PESC, au-delà des sanctions économiques. Cette ambiguïté tient au fait que la formulation de l'article 23f fait l'objet d'un compromis entre le SPÖ, qui ne veut précipiter aucune modification d'envergure de la neutralité, et l'ÖVP, souhaitant dès l'entrée dans l'UE le moins de restrictions possibles à la participation autrichienne à la PESC (Luif 1995, 335). Selon ce compromis, la neutralité pourra être révisée (voire abandonnée) dans le futur, en fonction des développements concrets de la PESC (Luif 1995, 244).

En somme, la démarche d'accession de l'Autriche à l'UE a impliqué un changement des pratiques et des représentations du MAE relativement à la politique de neutralité. Ce faisant, c'est un concept clé attaché au rôle du MAE, de sa création jusqu'à la fin des années 1980, qui a été transformé. Les diplomates ayant connu la période avant la démarche d'accession - en particulier ceux pour qui le type de neutralité appliqué auparavant était particulièrement important - ont été confrontés au besoin de développer une nouvelle représentation de leur identité institutionnelle.

1.3 Remarques sur la logique sous-jacente à la redéfinition de la neutralité

Notre compte rendu des modifications apportées à la neutralité fait apparaître une logique instrumentale; afin d'atteindre un objectif hautement désiré par les dirigeants politiques, le MAE a mis en œuvre une stratégie d'ajustement de la politique de neutralité afin que celle-ci ne constitue pas un obstacle à l'adhésion. Cette logique instrumentale ne saurait toutefois être comprise en dehors d'un contexte de positions et de dispositions. En ce qui a trait au premier de ces éléments, le gouvernement autrichien (et donc le MAE) se trouve, avec la démarche d'accession, à l'intersection de deux logiques distinctes. D'une part, la neutralité constitue un obstacle (ou capital négatif) dans le champ de la CE/UE, champ dans lequel le gouvernement autrichien occupe une position de relative faiblesse; les États membres de la CE/UE sont en effet en mesure de fixer unilatéralement les termes de l'adhésion. Mais d'autre part, dans le champ national, la politique de neutralité est très importante pour la majorité des citoyens. Un compromis s'impose donc entre ces deux logiques, d'autant plus que l'objectif d'accéder à l'UE revêt une importance considérable pour la classe politique.

Une description exhaustive des dispositions (*habitus*) des acteurs autrichiens ayant initié puis mené le projet d'adhésion de l'Autriche à la CE/UE dépasserait l'objet de ce chapitre, mais certaines remarques peuvent être faites. Lorsque l'on se penche sur le profil du diplomate ayant joué un rôle clé (selon Entretiens 11, 16, 25) dans la décision de rejoindre la CE, Manfred Scheich, la trajectoire professionnelle de ce dernier suggère l'acquisition de dispositions favorables à ce projet. Après des études en économie, Scheich a entamé sa carrière en travaillant sur les questions d'intégration européenne (au sens large : OEEC, CE, AEE) au sein de la Chancellerie fédérale, puis a occupé de 1983 à 1986 le poste d'ambassadeur auprès de la CE. Scheich était également très proche d'Alois Mock (ÖVP), ministre des Affaires étrangères de 1987 à 1995 (Entretien 25). Lorsque l'on s'attarde aux représentations de Scheich dans sa description du contexte historique sous-tendant la demande d'adhésion autrichienne, il apparaît que pour lui et contrairement à plusieurs au sein du MAE, il allait de soi que l'Autriche rejoigne la CE une fois que les circonstances politiques seraient favorables :

[...] it all leads back to the OEEC and the Marschall Plan. We were part let's say, from the start, of the European cooperation process... Brussels was always an extremely important point of reference for us. ... When I was there... we had the free-trade relationship and we were let's call it, very very close; in today's language one might say, a privileged partner of the Union and the doors at which you knocked were always open. ... we always had sympathy... we were always, as a matter of principle, for the reinforcement of the European process. ...I am of the opinion, that Austria would have been a founding member of the European Union had it not been for neutrality reasons which didn't make it possible in those days of the Cold War and the confrontation between East and West. ... We were always pushing... but then I would say, there came, in the 1980's, an important moment... the political situation between, let's say, East-West and especially between the COMECON and the European Community, their relation changed from one of confrontation to cooperation. And this started in the mid-1980's and it was of course the Gorbachev years, the Perestroika and all this. ... This of course changed politically the whole parameters. ... This gave us, and certainly me personally, and I wrote it in my book, personally the idea: we have now

room. But it was not only myself, there were also from the Social democrats voices, from the Christian Democrats voices saying well, shouldn't we now go forward and finally membership. ...When I came back from Brussels, there was a new government and I had a very close relationship also to the new foreign minister Mock and we sort of created the idea to go beyond pure free-trade... (Entretien 25)

Bref, divers acteurs clés au sein du gouvernement autrichien, tel Scheich, étaient manifestement disposés à percevoir la neutralité d'une façon qui ne posait pas un obstacle de fond à l'adhésion à la CE/UE - contrairement à plusieurs au sein du MAE, tel que nous l'avons vu au début de la section 1.2.

Conclusion

Après avoir retracé le contexte historique de l'adhésion de l'Autriche à l'UE, ce chapitre a mis en exergue une implication majeure de l'intégration européenne pour la diplomatie autrichienne: le changement de ses pratiques et représentations relativement à la politique de neutralité. Le dépôt de la demande d'adhésion a marqué un premier tournant à cet égard, la neutralité rendant jusqu'alors inconcevable une telle démarche, pour la majorité des diplomates. Face au malaise puis aux pressions de plusieurs acteurs de la CE/UE – ainsi que dans le contexte plus large de la guerre du Golfe - le MAE est allé beaucoup plus loin en redéfinissant la neutralité. Considérant l'importance de celle-ci dans les pratiques du MAE, de sa création en 1959 jusqu'à la fin des années 1980, il apparaît juste d'affirmer que cette redéfinition équivaut, pour cette institution, à un changement identitaire.

Nous reviendrons, dans le troisième chapitre, sur la question de la neutralité en abordant les implications de la PESC pour les diplomates autrichiens, de 1995 à aujourd'hui. Avant d'y arriver, nous nous attardons au nouveau rôle que sont appelés à jouer les diplomates, une fois l'Autriche devenue membre de l'UE, dans la gestion des affaires communautaires.

Chapitre 2 - Jouer le jeu communautaire : la diplomatie autrichienne et la gestion des affaires internes de l'UE (1994 à 2009)

Dans la littérature sur les diplomaties nationales au sein de l'UE, l'angle d'analyse privilégié – que nous adopterons également dans le troisième chapitre - est surtout celui des affaires externes de l'UE, en particulier de la PESC. Cette tendance se justifie certes par le monopole qu'exercent les diplomates nationaux dans ce domaine, contrairement aux affaires internes. Mais puisque les diplomates continuent tout de même à jouer un certain rôle dans la gestion des politiques internes de l'UE, il convient de se pencher sur cette dimension de la diplomatie européenne. Dans cette optique, le présent chapitre rend compte des implications substantielles du champ communautaire pour la diplomatie autrichienne à partir de 1994. Mais d'abord, certaines précisions s'imposent sur le fonctionnement général de ce champ.

2.1 Le champ communautaire : enjeux et cadre institutionnel

Le champ communautaire rassemble une multiplicité d'acteurs qui œuvrent à l'élaboration, à la gestion et à l'exercice d'influence sur les politiques relevant du premier pilier de l'UE, ce qui inclut notamment: le marché commun, les règles de concurrence, la politique économique et monétaire, la politique agricole commune, les transports, l'environnement, le contrôle des frontières et la coopération judiciaire en matière civile (Haroche 2009, 22)³⁵. Nous incluons également les affaires générales (e.g. élargissement; activités de coordination multisectorielle; décisions sur le budget) comme

³⁵ Les secteurs suivants sont également inclus dans le premier pilier : la fiscalité et le rapprochement des législations, la politique commerciale commune, la politique sociale, l'éducation, la culture, l'industrie, le développement, la santé publique, la protection des consommateurs, les réseaux transeuropéens, la recherche et le développement, l'immigration et le droit d'asile (Haroche 2009, 22). Bien que la politique commerciale commune et la coopération au développement fassent partie des affaires externes de l'UE, nous les incluons dans ce chapitre puisque ces domaines relèvent de la logique communautaire.

enjeux du champ communautaire puisqu'ils impliquent une configuration d'acteurs assez semblable.

Dans les dossiers communautaires, les compétences sont tantôt partagées entre la Commission européenne et les gouvernements membres, tantôt exclusives à la Commission. De manière générale, celle-ci agit comme pivot dans la proposition des politiques. Les procédures régissant l'adoption de ces dernières varient selon les matières concernées, mais la procédure la plus courante désormais est la codécision où le Conseil et le Parlement européen agissent comme législateurs égaux. Les directives, règlements ou décisions adoptés par ces acteurs ont une valeur juridique obligatoire et sont opposables à la Cour de justice des Communautés européennes (CJCE). Au-delà des institutions de l'UE, le champ communautaire inclut divers lobbies européens ou nationaux et bien sûr, les représentants et les fonctionnaires des gouvernements membres.

Puisque nous nous intéressons aux diplomates impliqués dans le travail du Conseil, il convient de mentionner que celui-ci opère en dix configurations³⁶ distinctes (différents Conseils des ministres). Les diplomates sont impliqués, aux côtés des fonctionnaires spécialisés, dans le travail préparatoire de ces différents Conseils. Le comité préparatoire le plus important est le Comité des représentants permanents (Coreper), qui est divisé en deux formations différentes : le Coreper II, rassemblant les chefs (ambassadeurs) des Représentations permanentes³⁷ des États membres à l'UE et

³⁶ Affaires générales; Affaires étrangères; Affaires économiques et financières; Justice et Affaires intérieures; Emploi, politiques sociales, santé et consommateurs; Compétitivité; Transport, télécommunications et énergie; Agriculture et pêche; Environnement; Éducation, jeunesse et culture.

³⁷ Tous les États membres maintiennent une Représentation permanente à Bruxelles, généralement à

préparant les dossiers les plus généraux³⁸; et le Coreper I qui prend en charge la préparation des Conseils plus spécialisés (e.g. Agriculture, Environnement).

2.2 La diplomatie autrichienne dans le champ communautaire

Le champ communautaire a engendré un double repositionnement pour les diplomates autrichiens. Ils ont évidemment vu leur position changer relativement aux institutions européennes et à leurs homologues des autres États membres. Mais en outre, le champ communautaire a eu pour effet de modifier la position, et donc le rôle, des diplomates par rapport aux autres fonctionnaires de l'administration publique autrichienne. Les implications de chacune de ces dynamiques de repositionnement sont analysées dans la suite de ce chapitre.

2.2.1 Repositionnement des diplomates par rapport à d'autres acteurs de l'administration publique autrichienne

Jusqu'au début des années 1990, les relations de l'Autriche avec la CE avaient constitué un domaine pratiquement exclusif aux diplomates et au ministère des Affaires étrangères (MAE), l'exception étant le ministère fédéral de l'économie, impliqué de près dans les relations avec la CE depuis les années 1960 (Luif 1998, 118). Dès la période des négociations relatives à l'Espace économique européen (EEE) puis celles d'adhésion à l'UE (début février 1993), ce quasi-monopole du MAE a entamé un déclin. Tous les ministères (sauf celui de la défense) étaient désormais concernés par les relations avec l'UE et par conséquent, ils étaient impliqués dans les négociations et représentés au sein

proximité du bâtiment du Conseil.

³⁸ Le Coreper II est en charge de la préparation des travaux pour les formations Affaires générales; Affaires économiques et financières; Justice et Affaires intérieures; et Affaires étrangères – soulignons qu'ils exercent un contrôle davantage sur les aspects communautaires des relations extérieures, les aspects

de la mission autrichienne auprès de l'UE à Bruxelles (Luif 1998, 118). La taille de cette mission a donc été accrue considérablement à cette époque. Comme le rappelle l'ex-ambassadeur à la tête des négociations avec l'UE, les diplomates de la mission et le MAE ont alors été forcés de constater qu'ils ne pouvaient plus contrôler les communications entre Bruxelles et Vienne :

When I came back to Brussels the second time for the negotiations (in January 1993) the Austrian mission was already very big, almost all ministries were there... My deputy said "well, there's a problem, this is not acceptable; everybody wants to have its own reporting to its own ministry and so on. All that has to get on my desk!". I said "no it's over, let it go". I remember, the official from the finance ministry said: "well, if you don't want me to have my own direct contacts, well I'll go home and telephone the finance ministry. You can't control it anymore! (Entretien 25, Vienne, 2009).

La perte de contrôle du MAE sur la gestion des relations extérieures n'est certes pas un phénomène unique aux États engagés dans l'intégration européenne. Les progrès dans les technologies de la communication de même que la globalisation ont largement contribué, dans la plupart des pays industrialisés, à accroître le rôle des bureaucraties spécialisées en matière de relations extérieures (Hocking 2005, 3; Berridge 2005, 19). Toutefois, comme l'illustre le cas autrichien, le champ communautaire accentue grandement cette dynamique.

Dès l'accession de l'Autriche à l'UE, les ministères spécialisés ont été à l'avant-plan du processus de négociation et de gestion des politiques communautaires (Luif 1998, 118-19). Reflet de ce rôle clé, la Représentation permanente de l'Autriche (RPA)³⁹ compte, à partir de 1995, une minorité de diplomates et une majorité de fonctionnaires

relatifs à la PESC étant davantage laissés à la discrétion du Comité politique et de sécurité; voir chapitre 3) (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 79; Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008, 74-5).

³⁹ Lors de l'accession d'un État à l'UE, sa mission diplomatique auprès de celle-ci devient une Représentation permanente (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 234).

détachés des ministères spécialisés (Neuhold 2005, 51)⁴⁰. Ce sont ces fonctionnaires qui participent, aux côtés de leurs homologues européens, à la majorité des groupes de travail et comités préparatoires du Conseil dans les domaines communautaires. Soulignons que la négociation menée au niveau des groupes de travail est très significative puisqu'elle permet de régler en moyenne 70% des points à l'agenda du Conseil (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 228; statistique incluant les affaires externes). En contrepartie de leur rôle à Bruxelles, les ministères spécialisés sont largement autonomes dans la formulation et la transmission des instructions à l'intention de leurs fonctionnaires siégeant au Conseil (Luif 1998, 120). De plus, ils ont forgé leurs propres réseaux européens, entretenant des contacts étroits avec leurs homologues des autres États membres et avec les experts de la Commission (Spence 2005, 19; Entretien 19). Relatant son expérience comme ambassadrice à Londres vers 1998, l'une de nos interlocutrices a mis en lumière l'intensité de ces réseaux et l'inconvénient qui peut en résulter pour les diplomates :

In Europe the interaction on a direct level between the various branches of the administration have grown so much that, as an ambassador, you are running to be informed about what is going on... and to have your little input. But I mean they call each other constantly, all the offices talk to each other... they know each other from the meetings... (Entretien 19)

Dans le champ communautaire, une part importante du travail mené dans le cadre du Conseil échappe donc au MAE. Celui-ci n'est toutefois pas complètement marginalisé dans la gestion des affaires communautaires. À Bruxelles, les prestigieux postes de représentants au Coreper II et au Coreper I (RPII et RPI respectivement) sont demeurés entre les mains des diplomates, de même que les fonctions d'assistants aux

⁴⁰ La RPA est également composée de délégués de la chancellerie fédérale, des *Länder*, des municipalités, de la Banque nationale et des principaux groupes d'intérêts, lesquels jouent traditionnellement un rôle important dans le système politique autrichien. Cette multitude d'acteurs fait de la RPA la plus grosse

deux formations du Coreper (membres des groupes Antici et Mertens) (communication avec le MAE, juillet 2010)⁴¹. Les diplomates peuvent également servir dans certains groupes de travail et comités relevant du Conseil Affaires générales (e.g. groupe sur l'élargissement; Entretien 1). Au niveau interne, un accord conclu en 1994 entre les partis de coalition (SPÖ et ÖVP) a désigné le MAE, conjointement avec la chancellerie, comme administration responsable de la coordination générale de la politique autrichienne à l'UE (Pollak et P-Riekmann 1999, 7)⁴². Il faut savoir que les enjeux communautaires concernent bien souvent plusieurs ministères à la fois, ce qui soulève le besoin d'un système de coordination interministériel. À la tête de ce système, le MAE est en charge de la préparation des réunions hebdomadaires du Coreper, des réunions mensuelles du Conseil Affaires générales, ainsi que des rencontres pluriannuelles (environ quatre fois par année) du Conseil européen (Luif 1998, 121). Bref, contrairement à certains États membres comme la France où une administration distincte du Quai d'Orsay est chargée de la coordination des affaires européennes, en Autriche, le MAE a conservé cette fonction de contrôle général, bien qu'il la partage avec la chancellerie.

Implications des fonctions de coordination du MAE

Le rôle du MAE comme coordonnateur de la politique communautaire a donné lieu à quelques changements organisationnels au sein de la direction générale (DG) traditionnellement en charge des relations économiques internationales et des relations

représentation autrichienne à l'étranger (Neuhold 2005, 51).

⁴¹ Dans une communication par courriel, un diplomate du MAE souligne : « So far only staff from the Foreign Affairs Ministry have served as Austrian COREPER I Perm. Rep. It is not likely to become otherwise any time soon » (juillet 2010).

⁴² Selon Pollak et Riekmann (1999, 7), cette compétence partagée est « un produit typique du système corporatiste autrichien », la chancellerie fédérale étant historiquement dominée par le SPÖ et le MAE par l'ÖVP.

avec la CE/UE (DG III) (voir l'organigramme du MAE en annexe) (Neuhold 2005, 45). Désignée sous le titre « Intégration européenne et affaires économiques », la DG III a été dotée d'une section chargée des questions générales relatives à l'UE (institutionnelles surtout) ainsi que de deux sections pour la coordination: la section III.2 pour la préparation du Coreper II, du Conseil Affaires générales et du Conseil européen; et la section III.5 pour la préparation du Coreper I et le suivi des principaux domaines communautaires (d'après les organigrammes du MAE : MAE 1995-1998). Les autres sections de la DG III ont été adaptées quelques fois depuis 1995 en parallèle avec l'évolution de l'agenda de l'UE (e.g. ajout de l'élargissement et de l'Union économique et monétaire comme portfolios de certaines sections à partir de 1996). Dans l'ensemble, ces changements témoignent de l'alignement de la logique organisationnelle du MAE (DG III) sur les enjeux du champ communautaire.

En tant que coordonnateurs généraux de la politique communautaire autrichienne, les diplomates de la DG III sont en contact étroit avec les ministères spécialisés et une série d'autres acteurs nationaux : les partenaires sociaux (syndicats, chambres de commerce, etc.), les représentants des « Länder », des municipalités, etc. (Entretiens 9, 10). La manifestation la plus évidente de cette interaction est la réunion hebdomadaire de tous ces acteurs pour la préparation des Coreper I et II. Mise en place lors des négociations d'adhésion (mai 1993), cette réunion est présidée en alternance par le MAE (sections III.2 et III.5) et la chancellerie (Luif 1998, 121) et a pour but de finaliser la formulation des instructions pour les représentants autrichiens au Coreper (Falkner et al. 1999). L'interaction régulière des diplomates avec « l'univers domestique » marque une évolution importante pour le MAE (Entretien 9;

Nowotny 2006, 33-4). Traditionnellement, celui-ci était plutôt isolé du reste des autres acteurs de la politique autrichienne, comme le remarque une diplomate entrée au MAE en 1973:

It used to be that the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was an island unto itself. It was captive to its own mechanisms, fascinated by its own internal power plays, absorbed by its own internal administration. ...extraneous developments and entry into the European Union forced the recognition that others had also entered the realm of external relations... (Nowotny 2006, 33)

Reconnaissant le rôle important désormais joué par les fonctionnaires spécialisés et collaborant continuellement avec ces derniers, le MAE et les diplomates ne semblent toutefois pas échapper à une certaine lutte d'influence vis-à-vis ces acteurs. En 2006, le MAE a été renommé « Ministère fédéral pour les affaires *européennes* et internationales » (BMEIA - *Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten*), une initiative rare parmi les États membres de l'UE (MAE 2007, III; Entretien 3)⁴³. De même, lors de notre entretien avec le directeur de la DG III, celui-ci a souligné très clairement l'importance de la fonction de contrôle assumée par son unité :

One of the most important tasks of the DG is that we are the EU coordination unit for the Austrian government. That means that at the weekly meetings of the Permanent Representatives in Brussels, there's one desk, one unit in the Austrian government that is empowered to give instructions what the Austrian Permanent Representative will be saying or not saying, where he will be agreeing, where he will be dissenting at formal meetings in Brussels. And this unit is here with us. This unit we cover all issues in the first pillar that affect environment, finance, justice, transport, etc. So at a certain working level in Brussels, all instructions that go out have to cross our desk here because they have to be coordinated. We have many issues for example affect agriculture and labour department likewise; now if the two disagree, it can't be that the labour department gives the instruction we vote against and the other department says we are in favour. So, someone has to look that we always have a coordinated, coherent, position. And that is one of our most

⁴³ Outre l'Autriche, la France a également nommé son MAE « Ministère des affaires étrangères et européennes », mais la coordination de la politique française à l'UE est assumée par une entité distincte : le Secrétariat général aux Affaires européennes.

important tasks. And that's why, necessarily, we are in contact with all the other ministries. (Entretien 9)

Comme l'indique cet extrait, l'accent sur les prérogatives du MAE vis-à-vis les ministères spécialisés – et donc le rapport de pouvoir entretenu dans une certaine mesure entre ces deux groupes - est lié intrinsèquement au souci de transmettre des instructions claires au représentant au Coreper. Dépourvus d'intérêts sectoriels (en apparence du moins), les diplomates de la DGIII doivent agir comme des acteurs qui n'ont pour seul intérêt que de s'assurer que le représentant autrichien à Bruxelles défend une position claire et cohérente. Cette logique apparaît dans la réponse de la diplomate en charge de la coordination pour le Coreper II lorsque nous lui avons demandé comment le rôle de coordonnateur général du MAE était perçu par les autres ministères:

I really think that by now it's well established that we are trying to be as fair as possible and we see our role as... *just make sure that we get a position going*, you know that we seek the overall interest. ... If line ministries cannot agree, then we don't have a position, then our Permanent Representative can only intervene on certain issues. Because, I mean, we can't choose; if there's no coherent Austrian position, then Austria would have to remain silent, which would very often be to our disadvantage. So far it hasn't happened but that would be sort of the bottom line. (Entretien 10)

Comme le soulignent Hayes-Renshaw et Wallace, en assurant la cohérence, la constance et éventuellement la prévisibilité pour les partenaires à Bruxelles, la coordination intragouvernementale permet d'entretenir la crédibilité des représentants nationaux au Coreper (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 232). La crédibilité est quant à elle un capital très important pour être en mesure d'exercer une influence à long terme au sein du Coreper (ou de tout autre groupe du Conseil) (Haroche 2009, 45-47).

Or, les diplomates de la DG III doivent composer avec une structure institutionnelle peu adaptée à l'impératif de cohésion gouvernementale au sein de l'UE. En effet, d'une part, les compétences des divers ministères autrichiens ne correspondent pas à la distribution des tâches au Conseil de l'UE, ce qui accroît le besoin de coordination entre les ministères (Luif 1998, 125). D'autre part, en tant que chef de cabinet, le chancelier n'a aucun pouvoir légal d'imposer une ligne de conduite à ses ministres; il ne peut donc trancher les conflits d'intérêts entre ces derniers contrairement au chancelier allemand (Luif 1998, 125). Ainsi, depuis 1995, il a souvent été difficile pour les divers ministères autrichiens de s'entendre sur les positions à défendre à Bruxelles (Entretiens 13, 15; Luif 1998, 126). Selon les diplomates interrogés, ce processus de coordination interministérielle s'est amélioré avec le temps, mais certaines difficultés demeurent à ce jour (Entretiens 10; 13; 15) :

Sometimes it takes a bit long and it makes deal-making in Brussels a little difficult...whenever it comes to...expenditures, the lines ministries and the finance ministry, we have sort of diverging interests and we are trying to get a compromise going. So it's, how should I say, a lot of things work fine now because we've been a member since 1995; I would say that 90% of the time, it's sort of, it works without too many hassles, but there are problems in friction areas. ... the French President would be able to cut across and decide in favour of that or that position, but the Austrian Chancellor doesn't have that right, neither does the foreign minister. So to find a compromise, that's basically what we have to do, but it makes coordination more important, difficult... (Entretien 10)

Comme le suggère ce passage, l'Autriche est désavantagée par rapport à certains États membres de l'UE plus centralisés comme la France ou le Royaume-Uni. En plus de leur importante capacité administrative – qui favorise nettement leur influence sur les décisions (Haroche 2009) – ces grands États peuvent arrêter des positions claires, détaillées et cohérentes plus rapidement grâce à leur centralisation (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 246-247).

Bref, dans le champ communautaire, la diplomatie autrichienne est dans une situation où sa capacité à influencer les décisions au Coreper dépend largement des efforts de communication et éventuellement de compromis de la part des acteurs domestiques. Elle dépend aussi de l'information recueillie par les ministères spécialisés sur la position des autres États membres (Entretiens 10, 13). Cette situation de dépendance est tout à fait nouvelle par rapport aux conditions de conduite de la diplomatie autrichienne avant son intégration dans le champ communautaire.

La perte de contrôle des diplomates de la DG III sur la gestion des affaires communautaires, leur interaction accrue avec divers acteurs nationaux et leur plus grande dépendance envers les ministères spécialisés concourent globalement à une certaine égalisation des positions de pouvoir occupées par les diplomates et les fonctionnaires spécialisés au sein de l'administration publique autrichienne. Mais de plus, certaines caractéristiques traditionnelles du corps diplomatique autrichien tendent à être remplacées par des traits plus typiques du fonctionariat en général, faisant du diplomate davantage un bureaucrate comme les autres⁴⁴. Par exemple, alors que le personnel diplomatique du MAE change normalement de poste aux trois ou quatre ans, le diplomate en charge de la coordination pour le Coreper I travaillait au sein de la même section (III.5) depuis onze ans au moment de notre entretien (Entretien 13). La nature des tâches dans cette section étant de surcroît très spécialisée, ce diplomate a développé un profil professionnel en rupture avec le modèle traditionnel entretenu par le MAE, soit celui d'un généraliste (e.g. Entretiens 1, 4.0). À l'échelle du MAE, il semble que les diplomates affectés aux dossiers communautaires forment un groupe

⁴⁴ Il est intéressant de mettre cette observation en parallèle avec celle faite par Neumann dans son étude ethnographique du ministère des Affaires étrangères norvégien, où il soutient que les diplomates ne veulent généralement pas être identifiés comme des bureaucrates (Neumann 2005).

relativement restreint au même ensemble d'individus à travers le temps (Entretiens 1; 15; 20; 21; 25), ce qui témoigne également d'une tendance à la spécialisation. Un diplomate de la DG III note à cet égard :

We tend to have a circular pattern by which those people working on EU affairs work on this topic here in the capital, then in Brussels and come back on EU affairs in Vienna. Only a small part of the personnel is really competent, so to say, in EU affairs. On the other hand, we need competence in EU affairs in all parts of the Ministry and that's why we have to motivate younger colleagues to work a while in Brussels with EU affairs. We have to broaden the group of diplomats in touch with EU affairs. (Entretien 1)

Soulignons, en outre, que les représentants au Coreper demeurent normalement en fonction de cinq à sept ans, ce qui est nettement plus long que la plupart des affectations diplomatiques (Davis Cross 2007, 151). Conformément à cette norme, le RP autrichien actuel n'est que le troisième depuis 1995 (Entretiens 20, 25). Tout compte fait, la relative convergence du profil professionnel des diplomates autrichiens avec celui des autres fonctionnaires de l'État manifeste une tendance à la « domestication » de la diplomatie, pour reprendre un terme utilisé par Bátora et Hocking (2009).

2.2.2 Repositionnement des diplomates autrichiens par rapport aux représentants des autres États membres et des institutions européennes

En concomitance avec leur repositionnement au niveau national, les diplomates autrichiens sont évidemment entrés dans une nouvelle dynamique sociale avec leurs homologues des autres gouvernements membres et avec les institutions européennes. Outre les diplomates occupant à Bruxelles et au MAE les fonctions évoquées plus tôt (RPII, RPI, Antici, Mertens et certains groupes de travail/comités; DG III du MAE), cette section prend en considération d'autres diplomates impliqués dans le champ communautaire, notamment ceux en fonction dans les diverses ambassades bilatérales de l'Autriche sur le territoire de l'UE.

Avant de poursuivre sur les implications de cette seconde dynamique de repositionnement, il importe de souligner que l'habitus des diplomates autrichiens ne correspondait pas nécessairement (variable selon chacun), vers 1995, aux dispositions valorisées dans ce champ. Un exemple à cet égard nous est fourni par le premier Représentant permanent (RP) autrichien, Manfred Scheich, qui avait accumulé une longue expérience à Bruxelles comme ambassadeur auprès de la CE au début des années 1980, puis comme négociateur en chef de l'adhésion en 1993-1994. Scheich laisse entendre qu'il a dû, lors de son entrée au Coreper, développer une certaine disposition à se percevoir dans un rapport plus compétitif avec la Commission :

When I was there in the 1980's (1983 to 1986), my main partner, in the context of where you went and where you solved problems...one was dealing with the Commission; the real points of reference were the Commission services. ... When you come back as a member, you work with Coreper and... Coreper was quite another world. You did not have real professional dealings with the member states' delegations when I was there the first time, all was with the Commission. The second time your world was Coreper; of course there's the Commission but this is another institution and we (Coreper) feel that we are in competition with the Commission. The Council takes the decisions and rules the waves, it cooperates with the Commission but is always irritated by the Commission. So this was a very clear difference. (Entretien 25)

D'autres diplomates ont témoigné plus explicitement du processus d'adaptation qu'ils avaient vécu (e.g. Entretiens 1, 4.0, 10, 15). Le témoignage le plus limpide à cet égard est venu d'une diplomate ayant servi au sein du groupe Antici dès 1995 (1994):

You are not necessarily very skilful on day one. You have to get to learn all these different fora. I must say that... from June on [1994], our people were allowed to sit as observers in various EU fora, including the Council, including even the European Council. And during these meetings we had the right to discuss, but not the right to vote. And that I think was a very good learning process. Because every Austrian who was involved - whether it was the Prime Minister (the Chancellor) or just ordinary *fonctionnaires* - had the opportunity to sit in the meeting which was going to concern him as from the next year, and to get to know the

procedures, get to know the people, get to know the way of operating. So I think that was quite a good training, yeah. But between knowing what the rules are and how the game is being played, and actually using all these procedures in a skilful way, that is a long way, that takes years to actually know how to use different tricks, play tricks on the rules of procedures and so on, that takes more time. So it was a very gradual process. (Entretien 15)

Comme l'illustre ce commentaire, l'apprentissage des diplomates autrichiens a largement reposé sur l'accumulation progressive, au fil de leur implication au sein d'un sous-champ d'interaction (e.g. groupe de travail du Conseil), d'une expérience *pratique* du jeu communautaire. Ainsi, au fil du temps, ils ont développé une meilleure maîtrise des règles informelles (un meilleur sens du jeu) du champ et donc, un plus grand potentiel d'influence dans le processus de négociations. Cette interprétation coïncide avec les propos de Hayes-Renshaw et Wallace (2006, 249-52) lorsqu'elles soulignent que les nouveaux venus au Conseil « tendent à être des acteurs du jeu désavantagés au début » étant donné leur moins bonne maîtrise des procédures comparativement aux acteurs plus anciens; ils ont normalement besoin d'un certain temps pour maîtriser non seulement l'ensemble complexe des règles formelles, mais surtout, pour maîtriser les règles informelles, ces dernières étant souvent plus importantes que les règles formelles (Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006, 248).

La nature tacite, ancrée dans les pratiques quotidiennes, du processus d'apprentissage vécu par les diplomates autrichiens ainsi que le temps écoulé depuis leur entrée dans l'UE ont fait en sorte, semble-t-il, qu'il n'était pas toujours aisé pour nos répondants de commenter leur expérience d'adaptation (e.g. Entretien 25). Néanmoins, la simple comparaison de la diplomatie autrichienne entre deux points dans le temps, comme l'a fait une de nos interlocutrices, est éclairante :

You could see that we had advanced significantly by the time of the second presidency; when 2006 came around we were much more, you know, into the game than we were in 1996 when we prepared for 1998. 1998 really was a presidency where we thought, we had to do it well but we won't, how should I say... no particular initiatives, there were very few sort of Austrian initiatives. In 2006 we were more proactive...It showed we were more masters at the game than we had been 8 years earlier. It's a normal learning curve. (Entretien 10)

La première présidence autrichienne (juin à décembre 1998) semble avoir constitué une période clé d'apprentissage pour les Autrichiens (e.g. Entretien 10)⁴⁵. Dans cette optique, la diplomate ayant occupé la présidence du groupe Antici à l'époque souligne : « it was a fascinating experience because when you are in the chair, you see much more than you see otherwise and you find out about the backgrounds a lot more » (Entretien 15). Mais au-delà de la conduite de la présidence comme telle, les préparatifs pour celle-ci, qui ont commencé deux ans auparavant et donc au tout début de l'expérience autrichienne dans l'UE, ont créé un cadre d'un apprentissage intense (Entretien 10). On nous a d'ailleurs décrit ces préparatifs comme « a kind of crash course for the whole Austrian administration » (Entretien 10). Plusieurs diplomates se sont retrouvés en contact étroit avec des acteurs plus anciens du champ qui les ont guidé dans la préparation de la présidence. Le secrétariat du Conseil ainsi que les fonctionnaires de la présidence précédente (en l'occurrence, les Britanniques, de janvier à juin 1998) ont joué un rôle important à cet égard – conformément à la pratique établie dans l'UE – en expliquant aux diplomates autrichiens concernés ce qu'ils devaient faire et ce qu'ils devaient préparer (Entretien 15). Quelques fonctionnaires des autres États membres ont séjourné au MAE avant et durant la présidence des Autrichiens pour aider ces derniers dans la préparation et la conduite de la présidence (Entretiens 10, 13).

⁴⁵ Il est d'ailleurs reconnu dans la littérature que la présidence du Conseil par un nouvel État membre représente le premier test majeur de son engagement envers l'UE (Smith 2004a, 108).

Inversement, avant celle-ci, certains diplomates du MAE ont été accueillis dans d'autres ministères des Affaires étrangères européens pour bénéficier de l'expérience de leurs homologues dans la gestion d'une présidence (Neuhold 2005 :45). Enfin, les diplomates en fonction dans les représentations bilatérales auprès des divers États membres ont pu eux aussi bénéficier d'un apprentissage tacite comme de conseils explicites à travers leurs interactions avec leurs collègues européens (e.g. Entretiens 10, 19).

L'ambassadrice autrichienne à Paris de 1992 à 1997 explique par exemple:

With the entry into the EU, we automatically became integrated into the group of European ambassadors... and when we joined, in the first six months of 1995, France had the presidency of the EU. So that was really an incredible learning experience, because we could see what was happening, how they were handling the presidency; we were, as European ambassadors, on the spot, much involved in the whole exercise of those six months. (Entretien 19)

Toutes ces considérations sur l'apprentissage des diplomates autrichiens mettent en lumière la première et la plus fondamentale des implications du champ communautaire pour ces derniers, soit le fait qu'ils ont dû aligner minimalement leur comportement sur les dispositions dominantes de ce champ pour assumer leur fonction de représentants des intérêts de l'Autriche. C'est dans cette perspective que les sous-sections qui suivent retracent l'évolution des diplomates autrichiens, de 1994 à 2009.

La logique des compromis

La règle informelle la plus fondamentale à laquelle ont été confrontés les diplomates autrichiens dans le champ communautaire a trait à la recherche de compromis. Le compromis est en quelque sorte un corollaire du système institutionnel de l'UE, en particulier dans les domaines régis par le vote à l'unanimité (Haroche 2009). Il reste qu'aucune règle formelle n'exclut, sous le régime de l'unanimité, qu'une

délégation nationale utilise son droit de veto pour bloquer l'adoption d'un acte législatif quelconque. Or, il a été reconnu dans la littérature que, dans la pratique, les négociateurs des divers groupes du Conseil recherchent généralement le consensus de tous les représentants nationaux, et donc les compromis, plutôt que d'utiliser le vote, tant sous la règle de l'unanimité que de la majorité qualifiée (e.g. Haroche 2009; Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006; Lewis 2005). En d'autres termes, les règles de vote et le nombre de votes attribués à chaque État membre importent, mais de façon limitée puisque la pratique prédominante est de rechercher le consensus et corollairement, les compromis. Somme toute, la règle du compromis découle logiquement de la prémisse non dite, i.e. la doxa du champ – tel que soutenu par Adler-Nissen (2009, 128-29) - selon laquelle l'UE doit toujours demeurer « en marche »⁴⁶. L'un des anciens RP interviewés illustre cette logique lorsqu'il clôt une description des pratiques de négociations au Coreper par ces mots: « So you have to... make a compromise and never to ruin the whole machinery » (Entretien 20).

La logique du compromis génère diverses pratiques et règles qui peuvent varier selon la position des représentants nationaux. L'une des règles généralement suivie par les diplomates siégeant au Conseil consiste à faire preuve de retenue dans la défense de leurs intérêts domestiques (Lewis 2005). Cela se manifeste, par exemple, « lorsque les délégations abandonnent calmement [sans protester] leurs réserves après avoir échoué à convaincre les autres de leurs arguments » (Lewis 2005, 950). Dans une étude sur le Coreper, Lewis (2005) rapporte des faits qui témoignent du comportement initialement

⁴⁶ En ce sens, le premier président de la Commission européenne (Walter Hallstein) utilisait la métaphore suivante : l'UE (CE) est comme une bicyclette; il faut toujours continuer à pédaler pour qu'elle ne s'écroule pas (Entretien 18; Cede 2004).

inapproprié de la délégation autrichienne au regard de cette règle. À l'automne 1994⁴⁷, dans le cadre des négociations pour l'adoption d'une directive sur les élections locales, le RP autrichien (l'ambassadeur Scheich) allait subir une certaine humiliation au cours d'une séance du Coreper :

The Austrian ambassador pressed for a special derogation twice at the level of Coreper. The first time, no one said anything in reply. "We just sat there and listened," a participant recalled: [German Ambassador] von Kyaw [as Chair] waited to see what would happen. But the second time Austria raised the issue, von Kyaw was very rough to the Austrian Permanent Representative. The Austrian Ambassador said in Coreper, "What is the logical argument why you cannot accept our case?" Von Kyaw replied very sharply, "We are here meeting very pragmatically, I don't have to explain the logical case to you." He said this very rough and it was the last we heard of the Austrian derogation. (Entretien de Lewis, mars 1997, dans Lewis 2005, 961-62)

Lewis rapporte également : « One large member state's ambassador with senior status among the group summarized Austria's behaviour in this case as simply, "they were too new" » (Entretien avril 2003, dans Lewis 2005, 962). Ce verdict semble refléter le fait que la délégation autrichienne, à titre de « nouvelle venue », ne possédait pas suffisamment de capital politique pour insister sur l'obtention d'une dérogation. Mais ce manque de légitimité apparaît lui-même lié au manque de maîtrise, chez le RP autrichien, des pratiques entourant la logique du compromis. Il semble que celui-ci s'est décrédibilisé, notamment, en demeurant trop focalisé sur les instructions de sa capitale, alors que le fait de se limiter à la défense de celles-ci « est un moyen sûr de demeurer en dehors de la discussion » (Lewis 2005, 953).

Lors de nos entretiens en 2009, les dispositions au compromis et à la retenue ressortaient clairement des propos de nos interlocuteurs, reflétant dans une certaine

⁴⁷ L'Autriche n'est devenue officiellement membre de l'UE qu'en janvier 1995, mais de juin à décembre 1994, les représentants autrichiens pouvaient assister à toutes les réunions du Conseil et participer aux discussions mais n'avaient pas le droit de vote (Entretien 15).

mesure un processus d'adaptation au champ si l'on considère les faits relatés par Lewis. Ces dispositions se manifestaient toutefois selon certaines variantes en fonction de la position de chaque diplomate dans le champ. La dynamique au sein du Coreper se démarquant passablement du reste de la diplomatie nationale dans le champ communautaire, nous abordons les dispositions des RP et de leurs assistants un peu plus loin, dans une sous-section distincte.

Chez les diplomates de la DGIII, la retenue dans la défense des intérêts nationaux a été mise en évidence dans l'idée de la sélection d'un petit nombre d'enjeux pour lesquels l'Autriche est plus intransigeante :

We choose our issues I would say. What you can do in the EU is you can be destructive very easily; you can just say no to certain things. ... Especially on issues where you need unanimity, if you say no. However you don't do that very often as a smaller country; again you sort of choose where you say this is my bottom line and I can't go beyond that. (Entretien 10)

[...] about maritime safety for example, Austria doesn't have ships, so it's not nice from the Austrian representative to have a very particular point of view. ...it's necessary not to run, so to say, a policy of saying no to each and every thing. We would have such a position on atomic power plants; Austria is very strict concerning atomic power policy... (Entretien 1)

De même, lorsque nous avons abordé la façon dont l'opposition autrichienne à l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'UE a été gérée au sein de l'UE, la même logique de retenue a été mise de l'avant par notre interlocuteur de la DGIII:

We ran a very high profile in these negotiations [about the enlargement to Turkey], absolutely yes. But on the other hand, we tried to avoid the trap that we have a "say no" policy. For example when we had the Council presidency in 2006, we conducted negotiations quite nicely and the only chapter so far finalised in the negotiations was under the Austrian presidency. (Entretien 1)

La retenue constatée chez les diplomates autrichiens s'inscrit dans ce que Lewis (2005, 949) identifie comme une « norme de réciprocité diffuse ». Ainsi, pratiquer la retenue dans des domaines peu importants (pour l'Autriche) permet d'accumuler un capital de bonne foi qui favorise l'attitude conciliante des partenaires lorsque des enjeux « plus importants » se présenteront à l'agenda. Cette logique comporte toutefois le « danger » (Entretien 1) de demeurer trop passif dans les négociations de plusieurs dossiers qui ne concernent pas l'Autriche, contrairement aux grands États concernés par pratiquement tous les sujets à l'agenda. Il faut donc faire preuve d'une attitude plus proactive pour se construire un capital social (et politique):

The danger is that you say something only when you have to defend your position. And this you have to avoid. You have also to come in with helpful positions, compromises even if it doesn't concern your own country... it is seen as positive... the Irish, the Dutch and the Luxembourgers are good at it. They keep an active role – especially Luxembourg. There are so many things and political fields of activity where Luxembourg is not important, but nevertheless they try to understand others' problems and come with suggestions and ideas and this makes them be seen as a very active and positive factor in the negotiations. And if they want something for themselves, it's much easier to get it... (Entretien 1)

Or, il ne semble pas que les diplomates autrichiens aient l'habitude d'une telle attitude proactive, l'auteur du dernier extrait affirmant, lorsque nous le questionnons à ce sujet : « We try to learn from countries like the Dutch and the Irish » (Entretien 1). Les obstacles à un rôle plus proactif de l'Autriche semblent toutefois provenir de la classe politique, comme l'expliquait une diplomate retraitée :

On the one side... we have, as far as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is concerned, very good people working on the European issues. ... But on the whole, I would say, the whole political establishment in Austria does not really see the EU as an enlarged political arena in which they operate, you know. They concentrate on issues that are, they think, politically relevant, and it has always been transport-traffic, nuclear power, these very selective issues but they don't really involve themselves in the mainstream debate. And I think that these are sort of the two sides of the

coin: on the one side you have very good people [diplomats] working there [in Brussels], but on the other side, you have a political level who is not using the possibilities that are there to the fullest extent. (Entretien 19)

Un corollaire des compromis : les contacts informels

Comme le remarque Haroche (2009) dans une étude sur les groupes de travail du Conseil, la perspective des compromis augmente l'importance des « conciliations informelles » (Haroche 2009, 41) et donc des *contacts* informels entre les négociateurs. Il s'agit là, certes, d'une pratique fondamentale de la diplomatie en général, mais elle l'est encore davantage, et avec une plus grande intensité⁴⁸, dans le jeu communautaire où les négociateurs opèrent, bien davantage que dans la plupart des autres forums internationaux, dans une optique de « résultats assurés » (expression utilisée par un diplomate autrichien : Cede 2004, 6). Ceux-ci sont en fait consubstantiels à la doxa du champ communautaire selon laquelle il faut toujours maintenir l'UE « en marche ». La directrice de la DG Affaires juridiques et consulaires du MAE – qui a acquis une solide expérience dans les affaires européennes, tant à Bruxelles qu'à Vienne – illustre l'importance des contacts informels au regard des compromis qui doivent être élaborés à Bruxelles :

I make a point of always going to the country [that] will have the presidency the next half year... to sort of get to know the presidency, find out about their projects, tell them about what's important to us, so they know what to expect from us, things like that. ... It's important to explain what our position is and to find out what their projects are, simply because sometimes there's a lack of knowledge about the conditions in a particular country and as long as you didn't find out about these backgrounds, it's very hard to find compromises at the European level. It's not enough in the meetings to say yes or no, you have to explain why it's yes and why it's no. And that's important for the Presidency to find

⁴⁸ Non seulement la production de résultats, par l'adoption de décisions communautaires, est plus « sûre » mais elle est beaucoup plus contraignante puisque ces décisions ont un effet direct dans le cas des règlements et sont justiciables devant la CJCE. De plus, l'intensité des contacts informels est entretenue par le fait que le processus politique est très rapide au sein de l'UE, comme nous le verrons plus loin.

out how they can find a compromise between all the different countries and interests. (Entretien 15)

De même, à Bruxelles, plus les diplomates entretiennent activement des contacts sociaux diversifiés, plus ils sont en mesure de recueillir des informations qui permettent au MAE d'anticiper le futur et de se positionner stratégiquement au regard des décisions communautaires qui seront prises :

[...] Contacts with the Council Secretariat: it's so important because they organize all the work and if you know how the work is organized, you can guess what will be the situation in the following week or so... what are the next steps, what are the next initiatives in the corner. It's so important to know, never to be surprised by any move by somebody, to know as much as you can in advance. And then you have to have good contacts with experts of the Commission, because the Commission is where the initiatives come from, and where most of the papers come from. And if you have the chance to discuss things with an expert before experts draft the documents, it gives you an enormous advantage, because not only you can learn how a Commission expert is likely to draft in this or that matter a document and would not take into consideration other alternatives, at the same time, you can try to influence it's way of thinking if you have a good argument on your side. And then you have to have informal contacts with all the other diplomats from the other member states ... you would try to understand their position... And it's important to know in advance, before you make an initiative yourself, what would be the likely reaction from all sorts of colleagues; which would be the colleagues who would have a problem, who would reject it flatly, which would be the colleagues who would back it. ... All this information is important for the capital... because... what the people in the capital have to think is how to maximise our influence on the events. So if you stick on a position nobody wants to buy, and you're completely left alone with it, you have no high chance to win that position. ... And if you change too much your own position, you lose your own profile too much. ... So you must find a middle way between what you want, you need, and what is digestible to the others. And to find this out is a tactical logic in a way. (Entretien 1)

Le Coreper et ses assistants : une dynamique particulière

La disposition au compromis est apparue le plus fortement chez les anciens RP. En contraste avec l'épisode de 1994 relaté plus tôt, l'ex-ambassadeur Scheich résumait ainsi son expérience dans ce groupe:

[...] all of our thinking was, you know, geared to finding common solutions to common problems. This was our task. In spite all our national positions. We very often tried to forget national positions... not quite in conformity with what our governments wanted from us. It has to be like that, it has to be like that. Because we were really geared to finding solutions to our common problems. And it was by fact of the institution. ...We felt a certain autonomy and a certain specific task, and a specific function...which was really in the best sense, the European function. (Entretien 25)

Et lorsque nous lui avons demandé si cette dynamique avait causé des problèmes avec l'administration centrale à Vienne, Scheich a répondu: "No...that you have to manipulate... This is the game you play, you know" (Entretien 25). Ainsi, pour l'ex-ambassadeur Scheich, au Coreper de 1994 (juin) à 1999, la disposition au compromis outrepassait de façon importante la défense des instructions nationales. Cette tendance était encore plus prononcée lors de la présidence du Conseil par l'Autriche (1998):

When you have a presidency, first of all you forget to a large extent your national interests. Then your task, really – I always like to say, my task when I chaired Coreper was to find compromise among 14, forgetting the 15th. Not for vital questions, but you know... you're geared to that. ... I remember I once did not stop a meeting until midnight because I wanted a specific solution...and I went out with one, and then with the next and then coming back and then saying let's take half an hour break and then try it again. It's a continuous [process] of convincing others, of finding formulas which would be acceptable and digestible by everyone. You know, it's always finding common solutions... (Entretien 25)

Le successeur de Scheich au Coreper a lui aussi témoigné de l'intensité de la recherche du compromis dans ce groupe, nous faisant part de diverses pratiques telles que le cloisonnement des négociateurs dans l'immeuble du Conseil durant plus de 24

heures, jusqu'à ce qu'une solution soit approuvée par tous (Entretien 20). Cette disposition à travailler aussi intensément à la recherche du compromis s'inscrit, notamment, dans la même règle de réciprocité que nous avons évoquée précédemment; elle permet d'accumuler un capital de bonne foi. En revanche, la pratique alternative, soit le fait de demander le passage au vote, est généralement exclue parce qu'elle tend à créer des « ennemis » qui se vengeront de vous dans un futur proche:

The Council represents member states, but at the end, you must find a consensus, a compromise. So the art of making a compromise is an art extremely well developed in Brussels. You have lots of tricks... how to solve conflicts. So basically, if you go to a vote, then something is not very good. You have the vote, but in practice, you really try to avoid votes. Why? Even if you can vote, you say all right, let's discuss one more week and so on, if you vote somebody down, he will take revenge on the next dossier. You can vote somebody down, but it's always at costs. So you really have to calculate is it worth, to create enemies, because you have other things like... You know you really have to calculate. (Entretien 20)

Ces propos illustrent la prégnance des considérations stratégiques au sein de cette structure sociale qu'est le champ communautaire. Par ailleurs, la recherche intense du compromis au sein du Coreper s'inscrit dans un cadre socio-institutionnel atypique au regard de la diplomatie autrichienne pré-UE. Au-delà de leurs réunions formelles une ou deux fois par semaine, les représentants au Coreper sont amenés à entretenir des relations interpersonnelles très étroites avec leurs pairs dans le cadre de leurs nombreuses rencontres informelles, comme l'a exprimé l'un des anciens RP : « You see your colleagues, the other Permanent Representatives, you see them more than you see your own wife. You have breakfast, lunch and sometimes dinner with them...[and] you deal by first name with all of them » (Entretien 20). Dans le même ordre d'idées, deux autres de nos interlocuteurs ont mis en évidence la dynamique collégiale et l'esprit de corps qui régnaient au Coreper et au sein du groupe Antici lorsqu'ils y ont siégé:

It was very much, in my days, a club... a very homogenous club... We felt, as members of the club, we felt in a certain way responsible to the club...there was a spirit, as I tried to explain before... it developed out of the function (finding common solutions to common problems) we had. (Entretien 25)

At the time we were only 15 members and it was still very much, both Coreper and the Antici group were very much a club of friends, really. We knew each other very well and that helped us find compromises and also say things which you wouldn't normally say at a formal level: what kind of problems you had at home and so on. That then helped sort out possible solutions. I mean the Anticis do not normally devise the compromises themselves, but they can pave the way and talk to each other and so on. It's a rather informal thing which I think work very well. And it was a pleasant way of working, it was very cooperative, we knew each other very well, so that was a very positive atmosphere. I think it's rare to have diplomatic fora which are so friendly. (Entretien 15)

Parallèlement, l'intensité du travail à Bruxelles signifie que la dimension mondaine souvent associée⁴⁹ à la diplomatie tend à être mise de côté, tel que le suggère cet extrait sur le Coreper : « you really sit, sit, sit, negotiate, negotiate, negotiate... You don't have much of these diplomatic dinners anymore, because you have to write your reports at night » (Entretien 20). Enfin, le degré d'autonomie et d'influence dont jouit le RP à Bruxelles ajoute à la dynamique tout à fait particulière de la diplomatie communautaire. Occupant le poste le plus important au sein du service diplomatique autrichien (Entretiens 9, 18, 20, 25), le Représentant permanent exerce une très grande influence au sein du gouvernement comme l'a indiqué l'un des anciens RP: « I think sometimes the Permanent Representative in Brussels is more influential than a minister in Austria. But we are not supposed to say this » (Entretien 20). Bref, le champ communautaire a créé, avec le poste de RP, un nouveau type de diplomate parmi le personnel du MAE, un diplomate particulièrement « souverain » (Entretien 25).

⁴⁹ Iver Neumann, par exemple, parle du verre de champagne comme « the root metaphor of the diplomat » (Neumann 2005, 74-5).

Les représentants bilatéraux dans les capitales des États membres de l'UE

Outre les diplomates travaillant à Bruxelles et au MAE, ceux en poste dans les représentations bilatérales autrichiennes auprès des divers États membres de l'UE ont également vu leur travail être réorienté en grande partie sur les enjeux communautaires, comme l'explique l'ambassadrice autrichienne à Paris de 1992 à 1997 :

Before, we were looking at the bilateral relationship between France and Austria ...how are our cultural exchanges, how are we perceived, do we have political issues that need to be dealt with. That was the bilateral framework. With our entry in the EU, that changed suddenly, because all of sudden, Vienna was no longer interested in my profound remarks about the bilateral relations to France. They wanted to know what is France going to do at the next Fisheries' Council and how are they going to vote on transport issues and energy issues and so forth. So the content of our work became experienced as a qualitative and a quantitative change. Qualitatively because the issues changed, and quantitatively because it went way beyond what was the usual contact to the other foreign office; we dealt all of a sudden with trade unions, institutions of higher education, whatever. Because the whole agenda of the EU then, was now part of our work. (Entretien 19, Vienne, juillet 2009)

Ainsi, les diplomates en fonction dans les capitales européennes jouent, à partir de 1995, un rôle stratégique important pour informer le MAE des initiatives et du positionnement de l'État hôte au regard des enjeux qui seront discutés au Conseil à Bruxelles. Ce faisant, ils sont amenés à communiquer avec une plus grande diversité d'acteurs : ministères spécialisés, partenaires sociaux, *think tanks*, organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), etc. (Bátora et Hocking 2009, 176). En outre, le lobbying, activité typique de la diplomatie bilatérale, est maintenant pratiqué dans l'optique d'obtenir le support du gouvernement hôte dans les négociations communautaires (Neuhold 2005; Entretien 10). Cette quête de soutien est parfois exercée conjointement avec les représentations d'États membres partageant les mêmes intérêts que l'Autriche; par exemple, à Londres, les Autrichiens et les membres du groupe Visegrad (République tchèque, Hongrie,

Slovaquie, Pologne) collaborent étroitement ensemble sur certains enjeux afin d'exercer une plus grande influence sur le gouvernement britannique (Bátora et Hocking 2009, 177). Dans l'ensemble, le lobbying intra-UE s'inscrit dans la pratique courante de former des coalitions en amont des réunions officielles du Conseil (Naurin et Wallace 2008, 5; Haroche 2009, 66). Soulignons également que les ambassades bilatérales tendent à être utilisées pour faire pression sur les capitales hôtes lorsque, occasionnellement, les négociations stagnent au niveau des groupes de travail du Conseil (Entretien 13).

Étant donné l'importance du réseau diplomatique bilatéral dans le champ communautaire⁵⁰, le gouvernement autrichien a ouvert de nouvelles ambassades dans certaines capitales européennes. En préparation de la présidence autrichienne du Conseil en 1998, des ambassades ont été ouvertes dans les États baltes, à Riga, Tallin et Vilnius (FPY 1997, 50; Alecu de Flers 2007, 188)⁵¹. En 2004-2005, avec l'entrée dans l'UE de Malte et Chypre, des représentations bilatérales ont été mises en place à Valleta et Nicosie (Alecu de Flers 2007, 189). Le lien direct entre les enjeux communautaires et l'ouverture d'une ambassade à Malte est souligné dans l'extrait suivant :

When you're ambassador in an EU country like I was in Malta, nearly everything you do is EU-related. ...we opened our embassy in Malta after we joined the EU specifically with the interest of finding as many... I wouldn't say similarities but finding common grounds, trying to figure out how the Maltese would act or both or, you know, give the background

⁵⁰ Selon les entretiens menés en 2008 par Bátora et Hocking (auprès de diplomates autrichiens postés à Londres notamment), les ambassades bilatérales sont devenues particulièrement importantes ces dernières années dans le processus de formation des politiques de l'UE, étant donné l'augmentation du nombre d'États membres et le fait qu'il y a maintenant moins de législation, ce qui engendrerait des processus d'influence plus informels et décentralisés (Bátora et Hocking 2009, 171). L'une des personnes interviewées (ambassade allemande à Londres) par Bátora et Hocking affirme d'ailleurs : « What goes on in Brussels is formed in the capitals » (171).

⁵¹ Les États baltes n'étaient pas encore membres de l'UE à l'époque, mais leurs négociations d'adhésion avaient été lancées officiellement en 1997 et allaient occuper une place importante dans l'agenda de la présidence de l'Autriche en 1998 (Sajdik et Swarzinger 2007, 66).

to their positions and at the same time lobby for Austria's interests and get Malteses' support where we could. ... that's the job in an EU country, even though you have some bilateral issues of economic exchange and cultural exchange, etc., but overall the EU-angle is stronger than anything else. (Entretien 10)

2.2.3 Une nouvelle logique temporelle

Dans l'ensemble, les deux sections précédentes (2.2.1 et 2.2.2) font apparaître une implication fondamentale du champ communautaire : celui-ci a inséré les diplomates autrichiens dans une nouvelle logique temporelle. À l'instar des cas britannique, danois et suédois étudiés par Ekengren (2002), la nature et le rythme du travail des diplomates autrichiens sont déterminés pour une très large part, depuis 1995, par le calendrier communautaire.

Au-delà des diplomates en fonction à Bruxelles, la prégnance du calendrier communautaire est évidemment la plus forte au sein de la DGIII du MAE, comme le souligne le directeur de cette unité :

Here we work according to a calendar which isn't really ours, but which is the working calendar of each Council presidency and by the Commission, so in that sense we are not really autonomous. We always live and work by someone else's calendar. (Entretien 9)

Tel que souligné plus tôt, une part importante du travail de la DGIII concerne les réunions du Coreper I et du Coreper II, pour lesquelles le MAE organise, une fois par semaine, une réunion interministérielle avant de transmettre ses instructions au RP et à son représentant adjoint. Outre cet élément hebdomadaire de l'agenda, l'horaire mensuel et annuel de certains diplomates de la DGIII (section III.2 en particulier) est conçu en fonction du Conseil Affaires générales, pour lequel ils gèrent les préparatifs et se déplacent à Bruxelles aux côtés de leur ministre, et en fonction des quelques réunions

annuelles du Conseil européen (Entretien 10). Selon l'un de nos interlocuteurs de la DGIII, la préparation des Conseils européens (conjointement avec la chancellerie) représente toujours une période de travail très intensive pour son unité (Entretien 1). Par ailleurs, la rotation des présidences du Conseil représente un rythme très important pour tout le MAE puisqu'il revient au gouvernement assumant la présidence, conjointement avec la Commission, de fixer l'agenda semi-annuel de l'UE (Entretien 9; Ekengren 2002). Au début de chaque présidence, et donc deux fois par an, certains diplomates autrichiens (le directeur de la DGIII notamment) se rendent à la rencontre informelle organisée par le gouvernement assumant cette présidence (Entretien 9). Enfin, plus rarement, le MAE doit préparer sa propre présidence du Conseil (les dernières présidences remontent à 2006 et 1998 tandis que la prochaine est prévue pour 2019) et préparer la position autrichienne en vue des occasionnelles CIG.

Pour rencontrer ces diverses échéances, les diplomates comme le reste de l'administration autrichienne ont dû accélérer leur rythme de travail (e.g. Entretien 10). Comme l'indiquent Pollak et P.-Riekman (1999, 6), « pour optimiser son influence dans l'UE, il est nécessaire de développer un style de décision plus anticipatoire et rapide » puisqu'il faut définir une position autrichienne sur divers enjeux communautaires en peu de temps (Luif 1998, 122). La pression ainsi créée pour les diplomates et les fonctionnaires a été mise en évidence par un ancien diplomate :

In the past there was not such a need to coordinate positions at such regular rhythm. ... There is a greater pressure to get your act together... When there's a time limit set for this or that decision to be taken in Brussels, there's no way out, you have to prepare the position at home, otherwise you're lost. And this is a whole new ball game. (Entretien 18)

Les contraintes de temps impliquent une pression d'autant plus grande pour la coordination interministérielle autrichienne étant donné certains traits institutionnels soulignés au début du chapitre (consultation des partenaires sociaux; autonomie légale de chaque ministère) (Pollak et P.-Riekmann 1999, 6; Falkner 1999, 6-7).

La rapidité est aussi très importante pour les diplomates en service à Bruxelles (Entretien 1; Entretien 20). Cela apparaît très clairement dans les propos que nous avons retranscrits dans la section précédente (p. 66) concernant l'importance « d'avoir tous les contacts informels requis » à Bruxelles; l'extrait en question est marqué par des références temporelles indiquant que, pour avoir un minimum d'influence, il faut amasser le plus d'informations possible « à l'avance » (Entretien 1). L'importance de la vitesse de travail à Bruxelles est également soulignée par l'un des anciens RP interrogés :

You have to be fast, really. Why? Because in the EU, it's not the big ones who eat the small ones, it's the fast ones who eat the slow ones. So if you (are) a small country, like Austria, you can be as good as big ones if you are fast, have good ideas, if you contribute something. (Entretien 20)

En effet, la possibilité est accrue, pour les représentants d'un petit État membre, d'user de leur rapidité pour exercer une influence sur les décisions communautaires puisque, comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, le nombre de votes formellement attribués à chaque État membre importe peu; une grande partie des décisions sont prises par consensus, bien avant les sessions ministérielles où elles ne sont que formalisées. Dans ce contexte, plus un diplomate fait preuve de rapidité en s'informant et en effectuant du lobbying auprès du plus grand nombre d'acteurs possible (e.g. les autres diplomates, les experts de la Commission, les fonctionnaires du Secrétariat du Conseil, etc.), parmi ceux

qui sont pertinents dans un dossier donné, plus il augmente ses chances d'influencer la nature des décisions qui seront prises en bout de ligne.

L'impératif de rapidité implique également que, contrairement à la plupart de leurs collègues en fonction dans une capitale hors du champ communautaire, les représentants autrichiens à Bruxelles ne peuvent envoyer leurs rapports deux ou trois jours après une réunion du Conseil (Entretien 1). Leurs rapports doivent être transmis au MAE le jour même des réunions, peu importe si cela implique de terminer une journée de travail après minuit (Nowotny 2006, 34) :

Time and quick work is so important. When I was the representative for the enlargement working group, I would write the report the same day; we would finish the meeting at 6pm and then I would work until 2am to have the report ready and send it in the middle of the night, to make sure that when the colleagues start to work in the morning, they have the full report of the meeting. (Entretien 1)

Bref, en intégrant le champ communautaire, les diplomates autrichiens ont vu diminuer considérablement leur capacité de travailler selon un horaire et un rythme distincts du reste de l'UE.

Conclusion

Les diverses sections de ce chapitre témoignent des implications considérables du jeu communautaires pour la diplomatie autrichienne. D'une part, le champ communautaire a engendré une nouvelle dynamique entre celle-ci et les acteurs « internes » de la politique autrichienne. N'exerçant désormais qu'un contrôle très limité sur la politique nationale à Bruxelles, une partie du personnel du MAE a évolué, dans l'exercice des fonctions communautaires qui lui sont restées, vers un modèle professionnel semblable à celui des fonctionnaires spécialisés. Il semble donc justifié de

parler d'une certaine « domestication » de la diplomatie. Les diplomates en service dans les ambassades bilatérales à travers l'UE manifestent également une tendance à la domestication de leurs fonctions, celles-ci étant largement orientées sur un agenda traditionnellement exclusif à la politique interne. Le fait que l'agenda communautaire soit si prégnant dans les ambassades bilatérales témoigne en outre des ressources considérables qui sont déployées pour exercer une influence minimale dans le champ communautaire.

Par ailleurs, ce chapitre a démontré l'importance cruciale pour les diplomates autrichiens de maîtriser les règles informelles du jeu communautaire, en particulier celles entourant la logique du compromis, de même que sa logique temporelle, marquée par la rapidité du processus politique. Cette exigence pratique est étroitement liée à la possibilité d'exercer une influence sur les décisions communautaires. Enfin, la dynamique sociale particulière dans laquelle évoluent les Représentants permanents à Bruxelles a créé une catégorie – très restreinte et hautement prestigieuse - de diplomates qui bénéficient d'une autonomie et d'une influence sans précédent dans la diplomatie autrichienne. Dans une certaine mesure, il s'agit là d'une tendance contraire à celle de « bureaucratisation » du diplomate évoquée précédemment.

Chapitre 3 - La diplomatie autrichienne dans le champ de la politique étrangère et de sécurité (PESC) de l'UE (1995-2009)

Conformément aux engagements pris durant leur démarche d'accession à l'UE, les Autrichiens participent activement à la PESC depuis 1995. Issue d'un ensemble de pratiques institutionnalisées progressivement, au cours des années 1970 et 1980, dans le cadre de la Coopération politique européenne (CPE), la PESC peut être conceptualisée comme l'enjeu d'un champ social distinct du champ communautaire. En effet, la configuration des acteurs et les règles de ce dernier ne sont pas tout à fait les mêmes dans le cadre de la PESC. Mais à l'instar du jeu communautaire, le champ de la politique étrangère de l'UE a engendré son lot d'adaptations pratiques pour les diplomates autrichiens, ce à quoi nous consacrons le présent chapitre. Nous clôturerons celui-ci en abordant la question de la conciliation de la neutralité autrichienne avec les activités de l'UE dans le domaine de la sécurité. Avant tout, il convient de s'attarder à l'arrangement institutionnel du champ de la PESC.

3.1 Le champ de la PESC : cadre institutionnel

Établie en tant que « second pilier » de l'UE par le traité de Maastricht (1992), la PESC est régie par un mode de fonctionnement intergouvernemental, ce qui implique que les gouvernements membres - i.e. le Conseil - en sont les principaux acteurs. La Commission possède un droit d'initiative, mais ce sont principalement les gouvernements, en particulier la présidence tournante du Conseil, qui initient les politiques (Mérand 2009, 33)⁵². Le Parlement n'a aucun rôle formel, mais il se prononce

⁵² Depuis l'entrée en vigueur du traité de Lisbonne (2009), le Haut Représentant pour la PESC possède également ce droit.

à l'occasion sur les enjeux de la PESC (e.g. résolutions). Quant à la Cour de justice, elle est complètement exclue de ce domaine.

Deux principaux instruments sont utilisés dans la conduite de la PESC : les positions communes, de nature déclaratoire, et les actions communes (e.g. financement, sanctions, etc.). Les positions et les actions sont décidées à l'unanimité des États membres, mais soulignons que depuis le traité d'Amsterdam (1997), un gouvernement peut recourir à « l'abstention constructive », ce qui lui permet d'être exempté d'une décision sans bloquer le passage de celle-ci. Les États membres peuvent également adopter des stratégies communes, mais celles-ci n'ont pratiquement jamais été utilisées (Mérand 2009, 34). Par ailleurs, le développement de la PESC a donné naissance, à la fin des années 1990 (1998-2000), à une Politique européenne de sécurité et de défense (PESD), dans le cadre de laquelle sont menées des opérations de gestion de crises (civiles et militaires).

En ce qui concerne la structure décisionnelle de la PESC, la direction stratégique est assurée par le Conseil européen (chefs d'État et de gouvernement), tandis que le Conseil Affaires étrangères⁵³ adopte les décisions lors de ses réunions mensuelles. À un niveau hiérarchique inférieur, un ensemble de comités et de groupes de travail - qui rassemblent les représentants nationaux - prépare les décisions qui seront adoptées par le Conseil des ministres. La plus importante de ces instances est le Comité politique et de sécurité (COPS), créé en 2000 et qui a succédé au Comité politique, lequel se réunissait beaucoup moins souvent. Siégeant deux fois par semaine et réunissant des représentants

⁵³ Avant le traité de Lisbonne, la formation « Affaires étrangères » du Conseil faisait partie du Conseil Affaires générales.

nationaux de rang ambassadorial, le COPS supervise la situation internationale dans les domaines relevant de la PESC ainsi que la mise en œuvre des politiques adoptées. Il exerce aussi « le contrôle politique et la direction stratégique » des opérations civiles et militaires entreprises dans le cadre de la PESD (Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008, 74). Le travail du COPS est supervisé par le Coreper II, mais dans la pratique, celui-ci ne change pas les positions adoptées par le COPS (Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008, 74). Enfin, le COPS est appuyé par deux comités spécialisés pour la PESD : un Comité chargé des aspects civils de la gestion des crises (CIVCOM) et un Comité militaire (CMUE).

Outre les instances décisionnelles présentées jusqu'ici, le Conseil est doté, depuis 1997, d'un Haut Représentant pour la PESC, chargé de contribuer à la formulation et la mise en œuvre de cette politique⁵⁴. Le Haut Représentant est assisté par plusieurs entités au sein du secrétariat général du Conseil (e.g. unité politique, Direction Générale E – Affaires politiques et relations économiques) (Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008, 81). Par ailleurs, au-delà du Conseil, il faut noter que malgré son rôle mineur dans la mise à l'agenda et l'adoption des politiques, la Commission est représentée dans les réunions liées à la PESC par un membre de sa Direction générale des relations extérieures (ou d'autres départements).

⁵⁴ Depuis l'entrée en vigueur du traité de Lisbonne, la fonction de Haut Représentant s'est élargie : celui-ci hérite de la présidence du Conseil Affaires étrangères ; il est l'un des vice-président de la Commission et chapeaute la Direction générale des relations extérieures de la Commission. Le Haut Représentant est responsable du leadership, de la gestion et de la mise en œuvre de la politique étrangère de l'UE. Il sera également assisté sous peu par un Service diplomatique européen (SEAE) (Giegerich et Wallace 2010, 453).

Au total, la conduite de la PESC amène des centaines de diplomates à interagir chaque semaine, soit en personne à Bruxelles ou dans d'autres capitales du monde, soit par les communications à distance. Soulignons que dans le cadre de la CPE, les États membres ont mis en place un réseau de correspondance par télex, désigné sous l'acronyme COREU (Correspondance européenne). Ce réseau a permis le développement d'une norme de consultation et de partage d'informations chez les diplomates impliqués dans la coopération politique (Tonra 2001, 13 ; Smith 2004a, 105-6). De plus, il a donné lieu à la création d'un poste de Correspondant européen dans chaque ministère des Affaires étrangères de la CE (Mérand 2008a, 78). À ce jour, le réseau COREU – désormais sous la forme de courriels (Entretien 4.0)⁵⁵ - de même que le poste de Correspondant européen existent toujours, ce dernier étant chargé de préparer les instructions nationales pour le COPS ainsi que le Conseil des Affaires étrangères (Entretien 14).

3.2 La diplomatie autrichienne dans le champ de la PESC

3.2.1 Ajustements organisationnels

Avant de faire son entrée dans le champ de la PESC, la diplomatie autrichienne s'est attardée à ajuster ses structures organisationnelles aux pratiques en vigueur dans ce champ. Durant la démarche d'accession à l'UE, la PESC tombait sous la compétence directe de la DG III (Affaires économiques et intégration européenne) du MAE (Alecu de Flers 2007, 181). À partir de 1995, c'est la DG Affaires politiques (DG II) qui est en charge de la participation autrichienne à la PESC. Étant donné la grande part de nouveauté qu'implique cette responsabilité pour la DG II, le directeur de celle-ci et son

⁵⁵ Certains des diplomates interviewés ont souligné que le réseau COREU est aujourd'hui moins utilisé qu'auparavant (Entretiens 8, 14, 22) ; les courriels normaux sont davantage utilisés en général, le COREU étant surtout réservé à la préparation de déclarations communes sur des enjeux régionaux (Entretien 14).

futur Correspondant européen se rendent, vers 1994, dans chaque État membre de l'UE afin de s'inspirer de leur fonctionnement respectif (Entretien 4.1) :

...we were just listening, asking questions: how did you organize yourselves, how is this done, how is that done...? We would have an intensive day or so at each capital and then we, well, decide...how to organize ourselves...how things should be handled...how to structure... (Entretien 4.1).

À partir des enseignements tirés de ces visites, un département central pour la PESC (section II.I) a été créé, en y intégrant le Correspondant européen et les diplomates en charge de la politique de sécurité de l'UE (incluant la PESD).

Au-delà de l'unité II.I, tous les autres départements de la DG II sont impliqués dans le champ de la PESC (Entretiens 4.0, 22). D'ailleurs, ces diverses sections déploient sur une base régulière (fréquence variable selon les domaines) des représentants dans les divers groupes de travail du Conseil dédiés à cette politique. Avec le développement institutionnel de la PESC, le MAE a bien sûr affecté davantage de diplomates à Bruxelles (au sein de la RPA) pour couvrir le travail du COPS, du CIVCOM, etc. Il convient de noter également que, depuis la création du poste de Haut Représentant pour la PESC en 1997, certains diplomates (relativement peu toutefois) peuvent être détachés pendant une certaine période dans les instances du secrétariat du Conseil (e.g. Entretien 22). Cette situation est sans doute appelée à prendre plus d'ampleur avec le développement du SEAE.

3.2.2 Faire partie du champ de la PESC : perception générale des diplomates

Tel que nous l'avons vu dans le premier chapitre, le projet d'adhésion à la CE a rencontré, à la fin des années 1980, un accueil mitigé au sein de la section des affaires

politiques du MAE. Cependant, à l'aube et au tout début de l'accession à l'UE, il semble que plusieurs diplomates étaient plutôt enthousiastes devant cette nouvelle situation (e.g. Entretiens 4.1, 7, 10, 18, 19). Pour l'un de nos interlocuteurs, conseiller juridique au MAE à la fin des années 1980 – et donc initialement opposé à l'adhésion – ce changement de perception a été influencé (selon lui) par le fait qu'au début des années 1990 et en particulier après Maastricht, les États membres de l'UE apparaissent de plus en plus comme un « bloc » dans les organisations internationales :

I remember when I was in Strasbourg (*Conseil de l'Europe*), which was from 1992 till 1996, at the beginning I noticed very much, especially during our chairmanship in 1993, that you were not an insider if you did not belong, so you had to wait until the EC members had agreed on something and then there was no way you could change that. ... I mean it was really a shock for me, because Austria, after so many years of complaisant, you know, international position, everybody loved us, we thought. Suddenly I became aware that we could not act as we wanted. I'll give you one concrete example; in 1993, as I said we had the chairmanship of the Council of ministers of the Council of Europe, and we convened the first ever heads of state and government's summit in Vienna in 1993. ... It was the job of the chairmanship to draft the declaration to be adopted by the ministers and I realized that there was nothing to negotiate about really. You waited until the EU members had agreed on something and then they would give you a paper and that's it. Because there were 12 of them, it was difficult to change anything because any change would have meant that they had to caucus again and it was terrible! In the end it was very frustrating because it was the EU as a bloc telling you what to do! And you were not invited even as the chairman; you were responsible for the whole thing but you were not invited to participate in their debates. (Entretien 17)

Le même diplomate rappelle son enthousiasme au début de son implication au sein de ce « bloc »:

It was very exciting, very exciting. Because suddenly you were part of a bigger group and you had to learn, all of us had to learn, what it meant. It meant that ...you always have to think about the bigger whole. Suddenly we were sitting in, I don't know, 20 or 30 foreign policy working groups: on the Middle East, on Africa, Asia, the UN, etc. And it was a totally different working style, totally different working style. ...you were suddenly part of the whole machinery. (Entretien 17)

Manifestement, pour l'auteur des deux extraits précédents, l'entrée dans le champ de la PESC signifie la fin d'une certaine isolation de la diplomatie autrichienne et le début d'un nouveau rôle stimulant. Ne s'exprimant pas toujours avec une telle ferveur, un grand nombre des diplomates interrogés a néanmoins souligné que la participation à la PESC comporte d'importants avantages : elle accroît énormément la quantité d'informations accessibles et permet, lorsque l'on arrive à convaincre les partenaires européens de sa position, d'exercer une influence considérablement plus grande sur les événements (e.g. Entretiens 4.1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 14, 16, 21). Ces remarques convergent avec le constat de plusieurs auteurs (e.g. Hill et Wallace 1996; Tonra 2001; Ginsberg 2001; Jorgensen 2004). Outre leurs fonctions utilitaires, l'accès accru à l'information et la participation au processus de la PESC sont des éléments de valorisation pour les diplomates autrichiens; ils permettent à ceux-ci de se percevoir comme des acteurs un peu plus importants que s'ils étaient exclus de la PESC. Cela apparaît dans les propos suivants, par exemple :

[...] in international fora like the UN... a lot of time is spent in EU coordination meetings and I wonder, especially for small non-EU countries like Switzerland, how you manage to keep abreast of the developments if you don't have contacts with the EU member states... and if you wouldn't feel left out of a lot of things if you don't belong to a regional group. (Entretien 7)

[...] when we became member in 1995, then we realized how much we had missed. to the extent that European integration became stronger... in foreign policy, it is evident that those who were outside had a big disadvantage. I know from my Swiss colleague – that's hardly a thing he would say publicly I suppose, but that's how they feel because they just don't really know what's going on. ... I mean they suffer a lot. All diplomats that I know in Switzerland would prefer to be a member of the EU. (Entretien 17)

Dans le même ordre d'idées, un autre diplomate souligne que ce que la diplomatie autrichienne fait maintenant, dans le cadre des affaires externes de l'UE, est plus

« sérieux » comparativement à la période précédant 1995 (Entretien 22). Somme toute, la position des diplomates autrichiens dans le champ de la PESC semble être interprétée comme une source de capital politique dans le champ plus vaste de la politique globale.

3.2.3 La gestion de l'information et le processus de consultation

La PESC comporte certes l'avantage d'accroître l'information accessible aux diplomates, mais encore leur faut-il savoir gérer celle-ci efficacement (Entretiens 4.0, 7, 10). Les flux d'information – notamment par l'entremise du COREU - sont si importants⁵⁶ au sein du champ de la PESC, que plusieurs des diplomates plongés dans cet univers à partir de 1995 semblent s'être sentis plutôt déroutés initialement (e.g. Entretiens 4.0, 17). L'une des personnes interviewées se souvient : « the famous COREU system... at the beginning this was like a wholly mess ! » (Entretien 17). Dans la même perspective, une autre diplomate affirme, lorsqu'elle commente ses débuts comme Correspondante européenne : « I think in the beginning what you have to learn is how to cope with that flow of information. Because: A) it speeds up the process enormously; and B) you have to somehow sort through it, sort out the important stuff and that again is a learning curve » (Entretien 10). Ces commentaires illustrent une inadaptation initiale de l'habitus des diplomates autrichiens (une partie d'entre eux du moins) à l'intensité des échanges d'informations entre les ministères des affaires étrangères européens. D'après nos entretiens, la plupart des diplomates ayant connu la période avant l'adhésion à l'UE ont développé plus ou moins rapidement une maîtrise de ces flux d'informations, mais il semble que leurs collègues plus anciens ont vécu une certaine difficulté d'adaptation (Entretiens 4.0, 19)⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ Selon David Spence, plus de 25 000 communications sont échangées, par année, entre les diplomates des divers États membres (Spence 2005, 30).

⁵⁷ Cette difficulté a été accrue par les changements technologiques survenant durant la même période des

Par ailleurs, dans leur position initiale de novices au sein du champ de la PESC, les diplomates autrichiens privilégient apparemment un profil bas quant à la façon de réagir dans le processus de consultation :

[...] you just read the other COREUs and at the beginning you don't do very many, you keep quiet. I don't know if you remember what Chirac said to the Poles, when they started to speak out right at the beginning, he said: "You Poles, you missed an opportunity to shut up!" Because at the beginning I mean, just be there, listen and learn! And you know, slowly, you become really part of it. (Entretien 17)

D'après cette citation, une certaine retenue s'impose donc au début de la participation à la PESC. Nous reviendrons plus tard dans ce chapitre sur la question de la retenue, qui demeure, comme dans le champ communautaire, une norme très présente dans la conduite des diplomates autrichiens mais pour d'autres raisons qu'au début de l'adhésion. Pour l'instant, voici un extrait d'entretien qui rend compte du principal changement de conduite engendré par l'intégration dans le processus de consultation de la PESC :

[...] there's a constant "chat room" if you'd like, among the 27 in the meantime, which goes via working groups, ministers' meetings, meetings but also via this COREU system; you have a constant flow and I think we're having 17 000 COREUs a year, which would flow on any subject between the EU capitals. And it changed because we were suddenly in this process, I mean you could not... you had to develop a reflex that you are part of a group and you're not going alone, and you cannot go alone because you have partners and whatever you do and what you say should in a way be cleared among this group. So this was a changing attitude which did not exist before. (Entretien 21)

Ainsi, comme l'a souligné abondamment la littérature (e.g. Tonra 2001; Smith 2004 ; Juncos et Pomorska 2006 ; Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008), les diplomates impliqués dans le champ de la PESC doivent mettre en pratique un « réflexe de consultation » ; la réaction à un enjeu donné et la mise en œuvre d'initiatives de

politique étrangère implique une consultation préalable avec les partenaires européens afin, si possible, d'agir en commun et, surtout, d'éviter l'adoption d'approches nationales divergentes. Dans une certaine mesure, cela implique que les enjeux bilatéraux deviennent multilatéraux, comme l'explique un ancien ambassadeur au COPS (2000-2007):

It was the first time I was working in the EU framework and the thing is it's a different working method, because on bilateral issues you usually go out and do what you want. When you pursue some bilateral issues within the EU, you're part of a structure: you have regular meetings, you have to consult left and right, you have to look at other actors which are having an influence about EU decision making, like the Council Secretariat, the Solana office is playing an important role, the Commission is also playing a role. So you have to watch out what's going on. But you have a structure. (Entretien 21)

La règle de consultation s'applique bien au-delà de Bruxelles et des capitales de l'UE. Comme le prévoit le TUE, les représentants des États membres sont tenus d'entretenir des consultations régulières dans les États tiers et les villes sièges d'organisations internationales (OI). L'intensité de cette pratique varie selon les endroits – elle est, par exemple, plus difficile là où les États membres ont des approches divergentes. Mais somme toute, une grande partie des représentants autrichiens à l'étranger (OI et États tiers) sont appelés, depuis 1995, à interagir régulièrement avec leurs collègues européens (Entretiens 4.0; 4.1; 8; 14; 21).

La coordination intra-européenne est particulièrement intense aux Nations Unies; les représentants des États membres y tiennent plus de 1000 réunions de coordination par année dans le but de voter en bloc dans les forums onusiens (sauf au Conseil de sécurité) (Mérand 2009, 29). Selon un diplomate ayant été affecté à la mission autrichienne à l'ONU ces dernières années:

There was the classical heads of mission's and ambassadors' meeting, which was once a week and then you had, I don't know, 3, 4, 5 consecutive or parallel EU coordination meetings every morning, everyday; on the various issues, each experts' committee would meet in the morning. So you had everyday 3 or 4 EU coordination meetings happening. ... [B]efore a specific item was discussed, you would sort of contact your other EU colleagues to know what their positions were. ... in the UN I think 95% of all the items, there is one EU position and it's just the 5% for which the EU breaks apart. (Entretien 5)

Ainsi, alors qu'en 1994, la délégation autrichienne à l'ONU émettait entre 20 et 25 déclarations nationales au sein de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU, en 1995 elle n'en comptait plus que deux, participant désormais aux déclarations communes de l'UE (Alec de Flers 2007, 193). Certains de nos interlocuteurs ne sont pas sans souligner les désavantages de ce changement :

[...] in New York ... you have a very long and laborious process usually to find a common EU position – not on all issues of course but often. Which means of course that, our mission is heavily engaged in discussions internally so to speak and has less contacts with delegations outside the EU, because usually once you have an EU negotiated position, then the Presidency, assisted by the Council Secretariat, negotiates with other regional groups. So, in a way, to my mind, all this has led automatically to a weaker national profile in the UN. (Entretien 4.1)

Comme nous l'avons vu dans le premier chapitre de ce mémoire, le « profil national » de la diplomatie autrichienne à l'ONU était au cœur de la politique étrangère autrichienne durant la guerre froide. L'importance des Nations Unies est en principe demeurée jusqu'à ce jour dans la politique du MAE – et Vienne demeure une ville siège de l'ONU – mais inévitablement, les pratiques de consultation intra-UE réduisent considérablement la possibilité de mener une politique autrichienne indépendante et d'entretenir un certain prestige fondé sur la visibilité d'une telle politique distincte (Entretien 2).

Dans l'ensemble, la consultation au sein de l'UE s'est imposée, de façon croissante depuis 1995, comme une pratique littéralement constitutive de la politique étrangère autrichienne. En d'autres termes, il n'y a désormais que très peu d'aspects de cette politique qui échappent à un processus de consultation avec les autres gouvernements membres (Entretiens 5, 7, 9, 18, 22). La prégnance de la PESC pour les diplomates du MAE est mise en exergue dans ces remarques de diplomates de la DG Affaires politiques : « you can't escape the EU, it's like using a computer...you can't escape it today » (Entretien 4.0); « as an EU member, you are first and foremost out to work within the EU » (Entretien 4.1);

If you look at our foreign policy report (yearbook)... if you just look at the index actually, the chapters are called: "the EU and Africa", "the EU and Asia", etc. So in the yearbook, I think 60 to 70% of Austrian foreign policy is like depicted by our CFSP...there is no separated chapter: Austrian policy vis-à-vis the Middle East, EU policy vis-à-vis the Middle East; it's in general assumed to be one thing. So I think it's not just cosmetic, that's really how we work here; whatever we want to achieve ... we are conducting our policy by the CFSP. (Entretien 7)

La citation précédente soulève un élément de contexte incontournable pour comprendre l'importance de la PESC au sein du MAE : en intégrant ce champ, plusieurs enjeux nouveaux s'imposent à l'agenda du MAE et n'ont donc jamais vraiment fait l'objet auparavant d'une politique bien définie (Entretiens 15, 17, 18 ; Alecu de Flers 2007, 197). C'est ce qui amène un fonctionnaire du ministère à affirmer : « une politique étrangère autrichienne en dehors de ce cadre [PESC] ... n'existe pratiquement pas dans plusieurs régions du monde » (cité dans Alecu de Flers 2007, 197). Nous reviendrons un peu plus tard dans ce chapitre sur cette question de l'élargissement de l'agenda de la diplomatie autrichienne. À ce stade, il faut retenir que cette dernière conduit sa politique étrangère dans le cadre de la consultation européenne, tant en ce qui a trait aux

« nouveaux enjeux » amenés par la PESC que dans ses domaines d'intérêts plus traditionnels, tels que la région des Balkans ou la question du désarmement. Par exemple, malgré les difficultés de l'action commune européenne au regard du désarmement et/ou de la non-prolifération nucléaires (domaine important de la politique étrangère autrichienne), il apparaît dans les propos d'un diplomate chargé de cette question que la pratique, dans ce contexte, demeure fondamentalement la même ; le département concerné au MAE consacre beaucoup de temps à participer au processus de consultation européen et lorsqu'il envisage une initiative, les partenaires de l'UE sont consultés en premier lieu (voir Entretien 5).

Par ailleurs, certaines initiatives du MAE échappant, à première vue, au cadre de la PESC sont en fait entreprises afin de renforcer la position autrichienne dans ce champ (et dans le champ communautaire) :

[...] there are initiatives we have which are not really on the European level, but are in a sense elaborated to have an effect on the European level. For instance, we try to have a very close relationship with our Eastern neighbours, including countries like Poland or Croatia... So that is an issue of maintaining good neighbourly context, but also an issue of getting together a group which can act together in the bigger EU framework. Because ... [with] our Eastern and South-Eastern neighbours... we have so much in common that we can, you know, in many very cases form useful ad hoc alliances. (Entretien 7)

Toutefois, si le cadre de la PESC s'impose de plus en plus comme le fondement même à partir duquel est pensée la politique étrangère autrichienne, il demeure que les gouvernements membres de l'UE ne sont pas tous égaux face aux règles de consultation de la PESC. Abondant en ce sens, deux diplomates soulignent respectivement :

You still have the feeling that some of the bigger countries – countries who have a permanent seat in the Security Council or countries who are on the G8 or so – they do have a certain, I would say, a more limited appreciation of these coordination meetings than smaller countries, for

obvious reasons. ... the big countries ... have a different way of dealing with things. And in particular you see a difference if a small country is president of the EU and if a big country is president of the EU. Of course, the big countries also hold meetings and pass on information, etc. etc. But many colleagues have the feeling that they do have sort of a second agenda aside and they do not involve all the EU members in all the decisions... (Entretien 8)

[...] the larger EU countries... especially the two Security Council members, France and the UK, will do what they think is right and they will inform but not necessarily consult the others before they do something. So it is a bit of a constant struggle. Where we would voice criticisms in the beginning, for example, is when you had these contact groups; so special groups for certain issues, especially on the Balkans, we were very unhappy with smaller groupings and we would voice that. Because there we had pronounced interests, I mean Austria at the time was the closest member state, together with Italy; geographically we had refugees... so bypassing us in that was more difficult... It's still happen, I don't say it doesn't happen, but it would be something where we would be rather critical. Nevertheless, it's a fact that, especially the four largest member states, but in particular the two in the UN Security Council take freedoms which might not be wholly compatible with what the treaty says. (Entretien 10)

Ainsi, étant donné, d'une part, la configuration des relations de pouvoir au sein du champ de la PESC et, d'autre part, l'importance de celle-ci pour la diplomatie autrichienne, le MAE se trouve plus ou moins tacitement dans une lutte constante, non seulement pour influencer la substance de la PESC, mais aussi pour assurer le respect des règles de ce cadre de coopération.

3.2.4 Temps et ressources requises par la PESC

Dans un autre ordre d'idées, comme nos propos sur la gestion de l'information ont pu le suggérer, le processus de consultation au sein de la PESC a nettement accru le rythme de travail des diplomates autrichiens (Entretiens 4.0, 7, 10; Alecu de Flers, 2007). Cela n'est pas dû aux flux d'informations comme tels, mais plutôt au besoin de *réagir* à cette information rapidement, comme le suggèrent ces extraits :

Everything is going much faster, because you have to react much faster, there is no time for reflection. I mean it goes back and forth, it's a constant stream of emails and information going back and forth, so the speed is much higher (Entretien 21).

[...] the work method, the work rhythm is much different. We were used to - okay, the mission at the UN asking for instructions... unless they said it's in 2 hours, you usually had the time to think... With the COREU, when the presidency sends out a COREU and says... tomorrow 2 o'clock, if you don't answer by then, you are supposed to have agreed. And this happens, I don't know, 20 times a day. So the whole work rhythm is very different than what we were used to before. (Entretien 17)

Ainsi, la capacité d'opérer rapidement est étroitement liée à la capacité de faire valoir son point de vue et de participer pleinement au processus. Au même titre que dans le champ communautaire, la diplomatie autrichienne est désavantagée à cet égard en raison de son effectif peu élevé et de ses ressources administratives limitées en général⁵⁸. En outre, la dynamique temporelle créée par le champ de la PESC (et le champ communautaire) représente d'autant plus un changement pour le MAE que, durant la guerre froide, il était amené à observer une posture plutôt réactive (une remarque également faite par Höll 2010, 12):

As a neutral country between two blocs, you would normally, in the Cold war, Austria would first have to wait what the two blocs would define as their position and then you would try to find the middle ground, somehow your space. ... So it was more a reactive position. In the EU, you're then for the first time in a position where you have to define your interest very early on... so in that sense it pushed us towards a more active role, and that took a few years, to put it bluntly. Because to change the whole way you operate, you know, reactive to pro-active, there's a change; it took quite a while to get used to that. And to some degree, it was even difficult to define our position and our interests because we were not so used to doing that; you know, clearly sitting down and defining in the next year or so we will have this concern or this interest. But over the years, it just sort of happen; you adapt to that, you speed up your process... (Entretien 10)

⁵⁸ La section du MAE sur l'Amérique latine, par exemple, ne comprend que deux diplomates (Entretien 14). Par ailleurs, selon l'une de nos répondantes, « The Austrian ministry of foreign affairs has 0,3% of the Austrian total budget, which is not much. And it is 1265 employees at the moment, which is smaller than an internationally operating law firm » (Entretien 19).

Par ailleurs, le simple fait de préparer et de participer à l'ensemble des rencontres prévues par le calendrier de la PESC draine en soi des ressources considérables, en plus d'imposer un rythme déterminé (e.g. Entretiens 4.0, 4.1, 5, 7). Outre le Conseil des ministres et le Conseil européen (ce dernier préparé également dans le contexte du champ communautaire), les rencontres à préparer incluent d'abord les réunions des divers groupes de travail basés à Bruxelles (une ou deux fois par semaine en général), pour lesquels les diverses sections régionales et thématiques de la DG II doivent formuler des instructions nationales. Ces mêmes sections doivent parfois préparer des instructions pour l'ambassadeur au COPS, lorsque l'agenda de ce comité touche leur portfolio. Pour environ 40% à 50% des points à l'agenda du COPS – qui se réunit deux fois par semaine - c'est l'unité pour la politique de sécurité (section II.1b) qui prépare les instructions, y consacrant environ entre 30% à 40% de son temps selon un répondant (Entretien 7). Le calendrier de la PESC inclut d'autres types de réunions régulières, plus informelles. Par exemple, les directeurs de la politique de sécurité se rencontrent en général une fois par semestre (Entretien 8), tout comme les directeurs politiques.

Soulignant la quantité considérable de temps qui est consacré au processus de la PESC, un ancien diplomate affirme :

I've always been critical of the fact that, since we became a member of the EU, because this absorbs so much of the energy and the time of our diplomacy, we have neglected many other parts of the world. Many parts of the world, people haven't heard from Austria for years because everybody is in Brussels, you know, working in some kind of obscure committee. (Entretien 26)

Ce point de vue ne manque pas d'ironie considérant le vif soutien de ce diplomate pour l'intégration à l'UE avant 1995. Quoi qu'il en soit, il vise juste en remarquant que

l'intégration au sein du champ de la PESC a entraîné une « bruxellisation » – pour reprendre le terme utilisé par plusieurs auteurs (e.g. Allen 1998; Mérand 2008a; Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008) - de la diplomatie autrichienne, le temps et les ressources de celle-ci étant désormais très focalisés sur les enjeux discutés à Bruxelles.

3.2.5 La conduite d'une politique étrangère élargie : retenue, comportement constructif et influence

Les enjeux de la PESC couvrant un large spectre de régions et de problèmes internationaux, la bruxellisation de la diplomatie autrichienne va de pair avec l'élargissement (ou la « globalisation », selon le terme employé par certains interviewés) de sa politique étrangère. Certes, dans les années 1970, dans le cadre de la politique de neutralité active, la perspective globale du MAE avait été accentuée, mais cette tendance affectait surtout le rôle diplomatique autrichien dans les grands forums internationaux, tels l'ONU et la CSCE (Gehler et Bischof 2006, 6-7). Concentrées en Europe et en Amérique du Nord, l'expertise et les capacités (sur le plan de l'analyse et du réseau diplomatique) du MAE demeuraient assez limitées concernant l'Amérique latine, l'Asie et l'Afrique (Entretien 15; Alecu de Flers 2007, 197). Or, une fois intégrée dans le champ de la PESC, la diplomatie autrichienne doit participer aux discussions de l'UE, et éventuellement aux actions, concernant l'ensemble des régions du monde. Cela représente donc un changement majeur pour le MAE, comme le soulignent respectivement un observateur de la politique étrangère autrichienne et un ancien diplomate:

On en avait pas du tout l'habitude, de faire vraiment de la politique internationale sur toutes les questions; oui quand on était au Conseil de sécurité mais c'était pas tous les jours, alors que maintenant c'est tous les jours. Il faut avoir une position et si on en a pas, et bien, on est hors jeu. (Entretien 11)

[...] all of sudden Austria, through the agenda of the EU, is involved in matters for which [it] didn't give a damn before! Before we joined the EU, we had no real motivation to get entangled in affairs like Sudan or whatever, which is now on top of the agenda of the EU when it comes to foreign policy. So through European integration, we are obliged to take a position and participate in the decision-making process concerning European missions all over the world. So it's a new dimension of foreign policy. (Entretien 18)

Ces citations illustrent bien le changement des règles du jeu que représente l'entrée dans le champ de la PESC: le MAE n'est plus en contrôle de l'agenda comme auparavant et il doit se positionner sur une foule d'enjeux nouveaux à un rythme qu'il ne maîtrise pas non plus.

Face à l'expertise limitée du MAE sur diverses régions du monde, celui-ci peut s'appuyer, dans une certaine mesure, sur l'expertise de ses homologues, du secrétariat du Conseil et de la Commission (Entretiens 17, 19). Mais lorsque l'Autriche doit assumer la présidence du Conseil, et ainsi assumer un rôle de leadership dans le champ de la PESC, il est essentiel pour le MAE d'élargir ses capacités de suivi et d'analyse d'une diversité d'enjeux internationaux, en ayant recours, par exemple, à des experts externes et en augmentant le personnel affecté à certaines régions (Entretien 19). Il apparaît également que la première présidence autrichienne (1998) a impliqué un certain apprentissage pratique pour les diplomates chargés de présider un groupe de la PESC. C'est ce qui ressort de l'extrait suivant:

At that time in 1998... I was head of the Americas' department. So suddenly I found myself, together with my colleagues in my department, responsible for transatlantic relations and relations between the EU and Latin America. Which meant I was the chairman of the so-called task force in transatlantic relations, which meant that I think I went 20 times to Washington and to Ottawa. Suddenly, you were thrown into the cold waters! You just did it! There was no big learning process really. ...[But] what at that time was still a very good school for learning was the troika,

the old troika, meaning the previous presidency, the current and the subsequent... so the Brits were before us and of course, as part of the troika, you learn already and when you come in... it goes rather smoothly. ...So that's it you learn, I mean, the world becomes smaller! Because you cannot say, Africa doesn't interest me, or Asia who cares! But you are part of it when you're in the EU. ...It's a totally different ball game really. The content of our foreign policy as a member of the EU is quite different. But you must never forget that... this is a question of solidarity. (Entretien 17)

Si la position des diplomates autrichiens dans le champ de la PESC les a obligés à faire preuve de solidarité en participant à la conduite d'une politique étrangère globale, elle les a également amenés à développer une stratégie pour tirer leur épingle du jeu, comme en témoignent ces propos :

[...] you have to feel acquainted with diplomacy worldwide and that was quite a challenge to really deal with the wide variety of regional problems that you can have in the world. And still to sort of find one's way to, to put focus on certain things, to find out how, in the regions where you have very particular interests, you can make yourself heard among 15 more member states - which may have rather different interests - in particular if you are small. So this is an art of networking. And also, I think for a small country to make it clear, we are there, we work with you on all the different subjects, we are not going to interfere with many of them, but once we say this is very important for us, then please you have to take account of that. And that's the kind of position you have to carve for yourself. (Entretien 15)

Ainsi, il semble que les Autrichiens appliquent dans le champ de la PESC la même logique que dans le champ communautaire (à l'appui de ce jugement également : Entretiens 7, 14⁵⁹ ; Alecu de Flers 2007, 192) : ils font preuve de retenue envers leurs partenaires dans les dossiers qui ne sont pas d'un intérêt particulier pour eux, estimant que ce comportement accroît leur capital politique, et donc leur capacité future de gagner l'appui de leurs homologues dans les dossiers importants pour l'Autriche. Soulignons que cette logique se distingue nettement du comportement égoïste de « l'acteur

rationnel » souvent mis en exergue dans la littérature en Relations internationales; la poursuite de « l'intérêt national » - i.e. ce que les dirigeants politiques jugent comme étant important - est liée intrinsèquement au fait d'entretenir une bonne réputation au sein d'un groupe et donc de se plier aux règles de celui-ci.

Si la retenue est perçue comme une source de capital politique, c'est parce que dans le champ de la PESC comme dans le champ communautaire, les comportements constructifs sont grandement valorisés⁶⁰. Comme l'a mis en évidence la littérature, bien que chaque gouvernement membre ait la possibilité de s'opposer frontalement à ses homologues pour signaler son opposition, le système de la PESC se caractérise par une forte propension des représentants nationaux à rechercher activement le consensus général par les compromis et une certaine modération (voir notamment Smith 2004a; Juncos et Pomorska 2006; Haroche 2009, 35-8)⁶¹. Les diplomates autrichiens sont bien conscients de l'importance de cette aptitude à la collaboration pour entretenir une bonne réputation auprès de leurs partenaires, comme en témoignent les propos de l'ancien ambassadeur au COPS, commentant son expérience en tant que président de ce comité (lors de la présidence de l'Autriche) :

Usually after some time everybody would join the mainstream and there's a sort of strong force and willingness from the EU side to have a mainstream position. And if one or two member states try to stay outside this mainstream, then there must be some very good reasons for them,

⁵⁹ Le Correspondant européen du MAE souligne que face aux enjeux pour lesquels l'Autriche n'a aucun intérêt particulier, « we mainly support the EU mainstream » (Entretien 14).

⁶⁰ Notons, d'ailleurs, que la disposition introduite par le traité d'Amsterdam et permettant à un gouvernement membre de s'abstenir de voter pour permettre le passage d'une proposition au lieu de bloquer le processus a été nommée « abstention *constructive* ».

⁶¹ Contrairement au champ communautaire toutefois, l'envergure des résultats produits est bien moindre; en d'autres termes, les représentants ne peuvent souvent qu'atteindre des compromis représentant le plus petit dénominateur commun (Haroche 2009, 36 ; Mérand 2009, 38). Par ailleurs, notre accent sur les comportements constructifs ne se veut pas en contradiction avec le fait que les discussions tendent à être très directes et franches (Entretiens 8, 17) et que, dans certains domaines (e.g. désarmement nucléaire), elles tendent à être très tendues et antagoniques (e.g. Entretien 5).

which must be recognized by the others... that they can prevent the consensus from emerging. ... Issues start at working group level, then go to the PSC (COPS) and then, theoretically it can go to the Coreper still, but that's not too well seen. ... usually you try to come up with a clean text. (Entretien 21)

De même, un responsable du MAE pour la politique de sécurité européenne met l'accent sur l'importance de préserver une bonne réputation en adoptant une attitude constructive:

Theoretically, you have the possibility to say no, I don't want this... but I think you must be very, how should I say, you must be very choosy about where to make such a stand if it's necessary at all. I mean, the patience of partners is limited, so uhh... having a reputation of blocking the process for relatively unimportant things is probably not good for you if you want to, you know, push something... You can always bloc things but sometimes you need to, you now, convince the others to follow you and if you have a reputation of a spoilsport that would be more difficult. (Entretien 7)

Le fait d'adopter un comportement collaboratif, et donc de soigner sa réputation, n'est toutefois qu'un facteur parmi d'autres quant à la capacité d'exercer une influence au sein de la PESC. Un autre facteur, soulevé dans certains extraits d'entretiens dévoilés précédemment, est le réseautage. Ayant compris l'importance de cette pratique au sein de l'UE en général, le MAE s'active depuis plusieurs années déjà à se rapprocher de ses voisins de l'Est, membres de l'UE depuis 2004 (Höll 2010, 168; Entretiens 2, 3, 7). Il semble toutefois que cet effort rencontre un succès limité (e.g. Entretiens 3, 7). Plusieurs commentateurs notent que l'Autriche accuse des lacunes sur le plan du réseautage et est plutôt isolée face aux divers sous-groupes informels au sein de l'UE, tels que le Benelux, les pays méditerranéens, les États nordiques (Höll 2010, 169; Gehler et Bischoff 2006, 14; Entretiens 2, 3).

Par ailleurs, selon nos entretiens (Entretiens 19, 21) et selon la littérature (e.g. Hayes-R. et Wallace 2006), l'expertise d'un État membre sur une région donnée est généralement reconnue par les partenaires européens, lui permettant d'exercer une plus grande influence quand cette région est à l'agenda. Dans cette optique, il semble que la diplomatie autrichienne a pu tirer quelque peu partie de son expertise sur l'Europe orientale et les Balkans (Entretiens 8, 11, 19, 21). La reconnaissance de l'expertise autrichienne dans les Balkans semble être attestée notamment par la nomination de diplomates autrichiens comme représentants spéciaux de l'UE dans cette région (e.g. Stefan Lehne, représentant de l'UE au Kosovo de 2005 à 2008; Valentin Inzko, représentant actuel de l'UE en Bosnie). Toutefois, l'un des extraits (Entretien 10) reproduit plus tôt (voir p.90) souligne clairement les limites de l'influence autrichienne dans les Balkans, où les grands États membres de l'UE jouent un rôle clé depuis les années 1990, dans le contexte des conflits armés qui ont suivi l'éclatement de la Yougoslavie. Enfin, l'adhésion à l'UE de plusieurs pays d'Europe de l'Est a réduit considérablement l'utilité, dans le champ de la PESC, de l'expertise autrichienne sur cette région. Bref, en ce qui a trait à sa capacité d'exercer une influence dans ce champ, la diplomatie autrichienne semble se trouver dans une situation peu favorable. Sans compter que la neutralité de l'Autriche est en quelque sorte un capital négatif pour le MAE dans le contexte de la PESD.

3.2.6 Concilier la neutralité avec la PESD

Comme nous l'avons vu dans le premier chapitre, le gouvernement autrichien s'est engagé, dans son traité d'accession à l'UE, à participer pleinement à la PESC, ce qui incluait donc toutes les questions de sécurité relatives à l'UE, y compris une

éventuelle politique de défense commune. Conséquemment, l'Autriche s'est affiliée à l'Union de l'Europe occidentale (UEO) en obtenant le statut de membre observateur en 1995, puis est devenue partenaire de l'OTAN la même année dans le cadre du Partenariat pour la paix (PPP) (Luif 2001, 143-5). Le rapprochement avec ces organisations était rendu nécessaire étant donné le rôle important leur étant accordé par les autres États membres dans le développement progressif des capacités militaires de l'UE (traité de Maastricht, article 17; Hauser 2006, 212). De plus, suite à la décision, prise lors de la CIG de 1996, d'intégrer les tâches de Petersberg⁶² dans le traité d'Amsterdam (TA, 1997), le gouvernement autrichien a une nouvelle fois modifié sa Constitution en y précisant, à l'article 23(f), que l'Autriche participe aux missions de gestion de crises prévues dans le TA (Lange 2006, 61). Depuis la mise en place effective de telles opérations en 2003 - dans le cadre de la PESD - les Autrichiens ont donné suite à leurs engagements en prenant part aux missions civiles (e.g. Congo, Palestine) et militaires (Bosnie et Tchad) de l'UE (MAE 2008, 26-9). Même si, bien longtemps avant l'intégration dans l'UE, les Autrichiens participaient aux missions de maintien de la paix de l'ONU, la dimension militaire de la PESD est nouvelle puisqu'elle va au-delà de ce type d'opérations; elle inclut, entre autres, des opérations de forces de combat et de rétablissement de la paix, alors que les forces autrichiennes ne participaient pas à ce type de missions auparavant (Lange 2006, 81).

Malgré le développement d'une dimension militaire (PESD) au sein du champ de la PESC, la neutralité demeure une obligation enchâssée dans la Constitution

⁶² Les tâches de Petersberg réfèrent aux missions de gestion de crises définies par les membres de l'UEO dans la déclaration de Petersberg de juin 1992. Elles incluent : les missions humanitaires et d'évacuation, les missions de maintien de la paix et les missions de forces de combat pour la gestion des crises, y compris les missions de rétablissement de la paix (Giegerich et Wallace 2010, 436).

autrichienne, bien que son interprétation soit restreinte aux trois éléments militaires évoqués dans le premier chapitre : non-alliance; non-implication dans des guerres; absence de bases militaires étrangères en Autriche (Lange 2006). Le refus de son abandon formel – malgré quelques débats internes à ce sujet dans la seconde moitié des années 1990 - tient au même fait qui était en cause avant l’adhésion à l’UE, soit l’important attachement de la population autrichienne à la neutralité (Lange 2006, 97-101). Si celle-ci n’a pas été abandonnée, un fossé de plus en plus important semble toutefois s’être creusé entre la conception qu’en ont les citoyens, d’une part, et les dirigeants politiques et les diplomates d’autre part. Un diplomate récemment retraité souligne d’ailleurs:

Neutrality is still very much an issue, but it’s more a god feeling than anything else. I’ll tell you, what people think neutrality is, is not what we do with neutrality. They say – I’m exaggerating a little bit but – for them [the Austrian people] neutrality means we take only the good things and we don’t do any of the bad things, you know, “let us not get involved”... In the debate about the Lisbon treaty... suddenly neutrality became an issue... [politicians] started to behave like they had to defend neutrality, but in reality if you look at it closely, if you are a more informed, educated citizen, you probably know that neutrality is to a certain extent...it’s still in our Constitution, but what’s the content of it, good question. It means we don’t participate in wars; we would not anyway. ... You can still win or loose elections with neutrality; it’s a very emotional, symbolic, you know... neutrality has become a symbol for the success of Austria after the Second World War. People identified that today we’re a well organized, fairly prosperous country, with our neutrality. Without knowing exactly why or what neutrality means. (Entretien 17)

En lien avec ces propos, il n’a pas été rare, depuis 1995, que les politiciens autrichiens exploitent le thème de la neutralité comme stratégie électorale (Lange 2006, 110-12)⁶³. Quoi qu’il en soit, selon le MAE, la PESD ne pose pas de problèmes pour la neutralité résiduelle de l’Autriche puisqu’il ne s’agit pas de participer à des guerres,

⁶³ Par exemple, en 1999, le SPÖ mène sa campagne électorale avec le slogan « Maintenir la neutralité, assurer l’emploi » (Lange 2006, 110).

mais plutôt à des opérations de gestion de crises (e.g. Entretien 0, 7). Dans cette optique, une guerre correspond à une opération militaire qui n'est pas approuvée par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU (Entretiens 4.0, 10, 17). Pourtant, bien que les États membres de l'UE n'aient jamais déployé une mission militaire sans cette approbation jusqu'à maintenant, selon le TUE, l'autorisation de l'ONU n'est pas requise (Alecu de Flers 2007, 241; Entretien 10). Au-delà de ces considérations juridiques, la distinction entre une « guerre » et une « opération militaire de gestion de crise » peut aisément être brouillée dans la pratique. En d'autres termes, la participation aux opérations militaires de l'UE peut facilement s'avérer en contradiction avec l'obligation de « faire tout en son possible pour ne pas être entraîné dans un conflit armé » (selon la formulation utilisée par l'interviewé 1). Lors de nos entretiens, une diplomate abonde en ce sens dans un premier temps, avant de se rabattre sur un argument représentatif de la fuite en avant du gouvernement:

[...] of course within the EU as such, you can't fully speak about neutrality because it's... we join in EU operations, we you know... (*hésitation*) We haven't had a problem case yet, the EU has not yet, as of yet, ever gone into a kind of peace-making, peace-keeping Petersberg operation without the UN mandate. So it has never been an issue because once there's a UN Security Council mandate, neutral or not you can participate...you know, it has the stamp of approval of the international community so it's not an issue. Theoretically you could have a case where the EU goes in an operation without the UN mandate and then maybe there will be a neutrality sort of issue. Under the Austrian Constitution we could still participate, it's doable, but it would raise certain questions regarding our neutrality. But that's sort of... Somehow it's an academic issue, it has never happened so far. (Entretien 10)

Dans l'ensemble, les propos que nous avons recueillis auprès de diplomates actuels font apparaître l'ambiguïté qui entoure la question de la conciliation de la neutralité avec la PESD. Alors que certains diplomates – non impliqués directement dans les questions de sécurité au moment de l'entretien - affirment que la neutralité

demeure la base de la politique de sécurité autrichienne (Entretien 4.0) et/ou s'avère une ligne d'action bien définie (Entretien 1), d'autres – impliqués actuellement ou récemment dans les questions de sécurité - s'empressent de mentionner que la neutralité n'est plus vraiment une question pertinente dans le contexte de l'UE (Entretiens 0, 7, 8, 10, 14, 21). Représentant cette deuxième approche, le directeur de la politique de sécurité affirme :

(Questions : Comment conciliez-vous votre neutralité avec la participation à la PESD? Quelles sont vos limites?)

Well, to some extent this is a philosophical question... because it was judged prior to the accession of Austria to the EU that neutrality was reconcilable with membership of the EU, but when it comes to a philosophical debate, of course you can ask the question where are the limits? Some people put it “solidarity inside the EU, neutrality to the outside world”. But at the same time, what does neutrality mean? For example, we had a discussion in regard to Serbia and Kosovo: when we saw what the Serbian troops were doing there, and the international community was out to stop them, should we really remain neutral in such a case?... when you see that a state machinery was violating human rights and was obviously committing war crimes. In such a case, can you step back and say, well sorry guys but I can't take any position on that. And there obviously it was quite clear that neutrality as such doesn't mean much that you sit and watch others committing crimes and you don't do anything. But what it came down to, neutrality nowadays I would say, after us joining the EU, after joining the EU military operations, after us cooperating with NATO, etc. etc., neutrality nowadays means that you are not member of defence or military alliances, point number one; point number two is that there will not be foreign troops on Austrian soil. Period, that's basically it. (Entretien 8)

En contraste avec le jugement de ce diplomate, le gouvernement autrichien a appliqué la neutralité lors de la crise du Kosovo en 1999, refusant le survol de son territoire par les avions de l'Alliance atlantique (Luif 2001, 149). Toutefois, à partir de 2000, il a pris part à l'opération de maintien de la paix de l'OTAN dans cette région (KFOR) (Lange 2006, 83).

Par ailleurs, si le gouvernement autrichien peut encore affirmer aujourd'hui qu'il n'est pas lié par une clause de défense mutuelle dans le cadre de l'UE, il l'a échappé belle à cet égard dans le contexte du traité de Lisbonne. Celui-ci a introduit une disposition (article 42§7) selon laquelle les États membres doivent se porter assistance en cas d'attaque sur le territoire de l'un d'eux, mais a permis une dérogation à cet engagement sur la base de la clause irlandaise (Myrdel et Rhinard 2010, 3).

En somme, il apparaît que les diplomates autrichiens sont impliqués (malgré eux) dans un double jeu depuis l'entrée de l'Autriche dans l'UE. D'une part, leur travail quotidien et leurs interactions routinières au sein du champ de la PESC semblent faire en sorte que la neutralité est évacuée comme enjeu « réel »; il s'agit d'une question « philosophique », tel que souligné dans un extrait précédent, et la représentation qui prévaut chez eux est celle d'une solidarité avec le reste de l'UE. D'un autre côté, la neutralité devient un enjeu à certains moments (rares), lorsque les pratiques autrichiennes à cet égard sont confrontées, soit à un processus formel comme la révision des traités de l'UE, soit à la mobilisation de l'opinion publique et des médias internes dans le contexte d'une crise internationale⁶⁴.

Si la conciliation de ces deux logiques ne semble pas poser de problèmes concrets la plupart du temps, il apparaît tout de même que depuis 1995, le gouvernement autrichien a accumulé certaines incohérences qui ont miné le capital politique de l'Autriche dans le champ de la PESC (e.g. voir Luif 2001, 149-51; Lange 2006, 80-90).

⁶⁴ Concernant ce deuxième élément, soulignons que l'Autriche a appliqué sa politique de neutralité non seulement lors de la crise du Kosovo, mais également lors de l'intervention américaine en Irak en 2003; dans les deux cas, l'opinion publique était défavorable à l'intervention militaire des États-Unis (Lange 2006, 80 ; Entretien 19).

Les Autrichiens ont souvent défendu (e.g. lors de la CIG de 1996 et de la Convention européenne de 2003) une intégration plus poussée dans le domaine de la sécurité et de la défense, sans être réellement prêts ou capables d'en assumer les implications concrètes (Lange 2006, 70; Hauser 2006, 235 ; Entretien 16). D'ailleurs, dans les dernières années, il semble que le gouvernement autrichien s'est attiré à quelques reprises les critiques de ses partenaires européens pour ses hésitations et sa contribution limitée aux opérations de la PESD (Alecu de Flers 2007, 234 ; Lange 2006, 80-3).

Dans un autre ordre d'idées, au-delà des problèmes soulevés par la participation de l'Autriche aux missions militaires de la PESD, celle-ci a des implications non négligeables sur le plan bureaucratique. Tel que documenté par la littérature (e.g. Keukeleire et MacNaughtan 2008, 84), le développement institutionnel de la PESD a fait en sorte que les politiques de sécurité nationales au sein de l'UE ont été de plus en plus dominées par les acteurs et les institutions basés à Bruxelles (COPS, CMUE, CIVCOM). Cette dynamique n'est pas aussi forte dans d'autres domaines de la PESC où, malgré l'existence de nombreux groupes de travail, les diplomates basés dans les capitales sont davantage au cœur du processus (certains groupes de travail sont d'ailleurs basés en capitale). Notre entretien avec un responsable de la politique de sécurité autrichienne au MAE illustre la prédominance des acteurs affectés à Bruxelles dans la conduite de la politique de sécurité autrichienne:

[...] most security policy matters are actually handled by the PSC in Brussels and by subcommittees... so we hardly ever...we don't regularly go to meetings in Brussels. ... of course, the EU, Brussels, is actually the primary fora for our security policy, only that it is predominantly conducted by our delegations to this PSC. (Entretien 7)

Tout compte fait, l'intégration de l'Autriche dans le champ de la PESC a engendré des changements drastiques dans la gestion et la nature de sa politique de sécurité si l'on compare la situation actuelle avec la période de la guerre froide. Étant auparavant relativement indépendante et autonome dans la conduite de cette politique, la diplomatie autrichienne pense et agit désormais en tant que membre d'un groupe à cet égard. Son exclusion de toute alliance militaire apparaît de plus en plus comme une formalité, alors qu'elle est amenée, en tant que membre du champ de la PESC, à entretenir des liens étroits avec l'OTAN (Entretien 7)⁶⁵. Et bien sûr, le développement de la PESD a réduit encore davantage le champ d'application de la neutralité, au point où plusieurs diplomates ne semblent plus y voir tellement de contraintes réelles ni de sens profond pour l'identité de politique étrangère autrichienne.

Conclusion

Alors qu'à la fin des années 1980, les partisans autrichiens de l'adhésion à l'UE semblaient peu soucieux des implications à long terme de cette démarche sur le plan politico-diplomatique (voir chapitre 1), il apparaît, au terme de ce chapitre, que ces implications ont été très significatives. De manière croissante à partir de 1995, la position autrichienne au sein du champ de la PESC s'est avérée structurante pour les pratiques et les représentations des diplomates du MAE. Ces derniers ont dû apprendre à

⁶⁵ Il faut noter que la relation avec l'OTAN par l'entremise du PPP est cruciale pour la capacité de l'Autriche de participer aux opérations de la PESD : « Our Pfp participation is actually very important to make sure we can participate in EU military operations. Because Pfp, in a sense, not only, but maybe the most important element of it, is that it enhances or helps improve the interoperability of our own forces; so make sure that the Austrian troops have similar standards of training and equipment than forces of NATO states have. And this interoperability is important also if you want to undertake EU operations. And there's no such mechanisms in the EU to do that so I think if we wouldn't have Pfp as a framework to prepare our troops for multinational operations, I think we would have problems or we would have to establish a similar mechanism in the EU. So actually there is a very productive or positive link between our Pfp membership, and therefore also our relationship with NATO, and our participation in ESDP, as far as military aspects are concerned ». (Entretien 7)

penser et agir comme membres de ce champ, en adoptant notamment ses pratiques de consultation, de recherche de consensus et de positionnement en commun sur une grande diversité d'enjeux internationaux. En même temps, dans les domaines présentant un intérêt particulier pour le MAE, celui-ci a dû développer des stratégies, dont la retenue et le réseautage, pour orienter les résultats de la PESC en sa faveur.

Les changements dans le processus et les procédures suivis par la diplomatie autrichienne dans le cadre de la PESC ont eu pour corollaires certaines modifications notables dans la politique étrangère autrichienne. D'abord, celle-ci s'est éloignée encore davantage du concept de neutralité pour se rapprocher de celui de solidarité européenne. D'autre part, la politique du MAE a été en quelque sorte globalisée tandis que sa politique onusienne a perdu de sa visibilité. La perte de visibilité affecte en fait l'ensemble de la politique étrangère, celle-ci pouvant de moins en moins être présentée comme le fruit d'initiatives spécifiquement autrichiennes. Comme le remarque l'une des personnes interviewées, cette perte de visibilité marque sans doute davantage un changement pour les politiciens que les diplomates (Entretien 5). Mais il demeure que, pour la diplomatie autrichienne dans son ensemble, la dynamique du champ de la PESC (et du champ communautaire également) contraste avec « la grande politique d'apparence » (entrevue 11) qu'a entretenu, jusqu'à un certain point, le gouvernement autrichien dans les années 1960 et 1970 (et 1980 dans une moindre mesure) lorsqu'il accueillait à Vienne le président américain et son homologue soviétique, par exemple (entrevue 11). De même, l'intégration de l'Autriche dans l'UE (champs de la PESC et communautaire) marque une certaine rupture avec la ligne de conduite plus réactive observée durant la guerre froide, le MAE pouvant alors décider de sa politique à son

propre rythme, après une analyse du climat régnant entre les deux superpuissances en conflit. La diplomatie au sein de l'UE favorise en revanche un style de décision beaucoup plus rapide, anticipatoire et proactif.

Conclusion

Notre étude a mis en lumière comment l'intégration européenne s'est avérée un facteur de changement au sein de la diplomatie autrichienne. Au niveau le plus fondamental, l'adhésion à l'UE a requis une adaptation importante des pratiques des diplomates aux règles des champs communautaire et de la PESC. Quelques changements organisationnels ont dû être apportés au sein du MAE et dans le service diplomatique autrichien. De même, comme corollaire du changement dans les pratiques, certaines représentations des diplomates témoignent d'une évolution importante, en particulier en ce qui concerne la neutralité.

Au-delà du cas autrichien, nous avons voulu démontrer l'utilité et la pertinence d'une approche inductive axée sur les pratiques des individus pour étudier « l'eupéanisation » des acteurs nationaux. Concept phare de la littérature sur l'intégration européenne depuis environ une décennie, l'eupéanisation – i.e. « l'effet » de l'UE sur les gouvernements et États membres – a donné lieu à un débat de plus en plus abstrait – voire « ésotérique » comme le remarquent Baisnée et Pasquier (2007, 8) - sur ses « mécanismes », ses résultats, sa logique sous-jacente (e.g. Alecu de Flers et Müller 2009; Major 2005). Utilisé surtout, depuis les années 1990, dans le champ de l'analyse des *politiques publiques* (Baisnée et Pasquier (2007, 13), le concept d'eupéanisation semble avoir fait l'objet d'une réplique maladroitement dans l'étude des *acteurs* de la politique étrangère de l'UE. En effet, plusieurs auteurs s'intéressant aux implications de celle-ci pour les gouvernements membres ont importé dans leur analyse une conceptualisation institutionnaliste et très macrosociologique de l'eupéanisation.

Ils tendent donc à présenter celle-ci, à la manière des analystes du transfert des politiques communautaires dans les ordres nationaux (e.g. Börzel et Risse 2003; Cowles, Caporaso, et Risse 2001), en termes de dynamiques *top-down* et *bottom up*, par lesquelles les gouvernements membres sont soumis à certaines pressions adaptatives en même temps qu'ils tentent de projeter leurs préférences au « niveau européen » (e.g. Alecu de Flers et Müller 2009; Torreblanca 2001; Wong 2005; Jorgensen 2004). La littérature sur la PESC a aussi beaucoup mis l'accent sur la socialisation des acteurs nationaux comme « mécanisme » de l'eupéanisation des politiques étrangères (e.g. Major 2005).

À notre avis, envisager les dynamiques affectant les diplomaties nationales dans les termes que nous venons de présenter contribue peu à notre compréhension, dans la mesure où il s'agit d'assertions déductives qui sont faites trop « à distance », ce qui implique de postuler *a priori* les logiques d'action des acteurs nationaux. Comme le soutenait déjà l'internationaliste John Ruggie à la fin des années 1980, les transformations au sein d'un ordre international (l'UE dans notre cas) reposent fondamentalement sur les « micro-pratiques » des agents (Ruggie 1989, tel que cité par Batora et Hocking 2009, 164). De même, c'est en adoptant un point de vue à petite échelle (méso- ou microsociologique), axé sur les pratiques des individus dans leur contexte social, que l'on peut vraiment saisir la « rationalité » des acteurs et qu'il devient possible d'envisager de façon intégrée l'action stratégique et les dynamiques de construction sociale.

Dans cet ordre d'idées, alors que le concept de « socialisation » est très présent dans la littérature sur les fonctionnaires nationaux impliqués dans la PESC, nous avons évité son emploi dans ce mémoire. Ce choix tient notamment au fait que le concept de socialisation est fortement associé, dans la littérature, à une conceptualisation en termes de degrés d'internalisation et de dichotomie entre les dimensions stratégique et sociale de l'action (e.g. Checkel 2005; Wendt 1999; voir l'introduction de ce mémoire). Or, dans la pratique – et nos entretiens l'ont illustré très clairement – les logiques stratégique et de l'à propos sont le plus souvent indissociables. Qui plus est, si l'on s'attarde au sens strict du terme « socialisation », qui renvoie fondamentalement au fait d'entretenir des relations sociales, présenter celle-ci comme l'une des dynamiques de la diplomatie européenne reviendrait à dire que la diplomatie traditionnelle ne repose pas, elle-même, sur des relations sociales, ce qui est tout à fait absurde quoi qu'ait pu le faire croire la littérature classique en Relations internationales. Bref, notre mémoire démontre qu'il n'est pas nécessaire de parler d'une socialisation des acteurs politiques et bureaucratiques pour étudier les (nouvelles) dynamiques sociales et constitutives de l'UE et en conclure aux implications importantes de ces dernières pour les acteurs nationaux.

En définitive, ce mémoire a posé un regard sur les processus « d'eupéanisation » dans la mesure où ceux-ci peuvent être envisagés, à partir d'une approche *micro* et inductive, en tant que « modes de mobilisation nationale des administrations » et de réajustement de leurs logiques d'action dans le contexte de l'UE (Smith et Maillard 2007, 197). En contrepartie de cette perspective descriptive et reposant sur le point de vue subjectif des diplomates, nous avons fait l'effort d'une

objectivation par l'usage de concepts (bourdieusiens) génériques de l'action sociale, ainsi que par la contextualisation et l'historicisation (jusqu'à un certain point bien sûr) à l'aide de la littérature empirique sur l'Autriche et sa diplomatie.

La prise en compte du point de vue subjectif des diplomates sur leurs pratiques de même que l'effort d'objectivation l'accompagnant ont toutefois été contraints par certaines limites dans le cadre de ce mémoire. Le fait de ne pas maîtriser l'allemand a bien sûr restreint nos possibilités d'accéder à un ensemble de documents qui auraient pu nous permettre de mieux comprendre le contexte autrichien. De façon plus globale, il est plausible que cela ait limité notre capacité de comprendre de « l'intérieur » la diplomatie autrichienne puisque l'un des aspects fondamentaux de sa culture nous était inaccessible. Par ailleurs, le fait de n'avoir analysé qu'un seul cas pose bien sûr une limite à la possibilité d'objectiver les dynamiques observées à partir des entretiens puis d'en dégager des généralisations à l'échelle de l'UE. En revanche, l'étude d'un seul cas a permis d'approfondir notre compréhension du contexte (historique, social, etc.; dans les limites posées par la langue, tel que souligné ci-dessus) dans lequel s'inscrit la diplomatie autrichienne et d'en tirer une analyse plus détaillée.

Dans le futur proche, la poursuite de nos recherches sur la diplomatie européenne sera l'occasion de dépasser certaines limites confrontées ici, notamment au moyen d'une approche comparée de deux ou trois corps diplomatiques au sein de l'UE. Par ailleurs, la mise en opération d'un service diplomatique européen (SEAE) - tâche qui n'en est qu'à ses tout débuts au moment où sont écrites ces lignes – ajoute une nouvelle dimension à la diplomatie européenne. Qu'est-ce que cela signifiera, dans la pratique, pour les

diplomates et les ministères des Affaires étrangères nationaux, d'opérer en parallèle avec le SEAE? Il s'agit là, à notre avis, d'une nouvelle question qu'il conviendra d'analyser à moyen et à long terme pour comprendre l'évolution de la diplomatie européenne.

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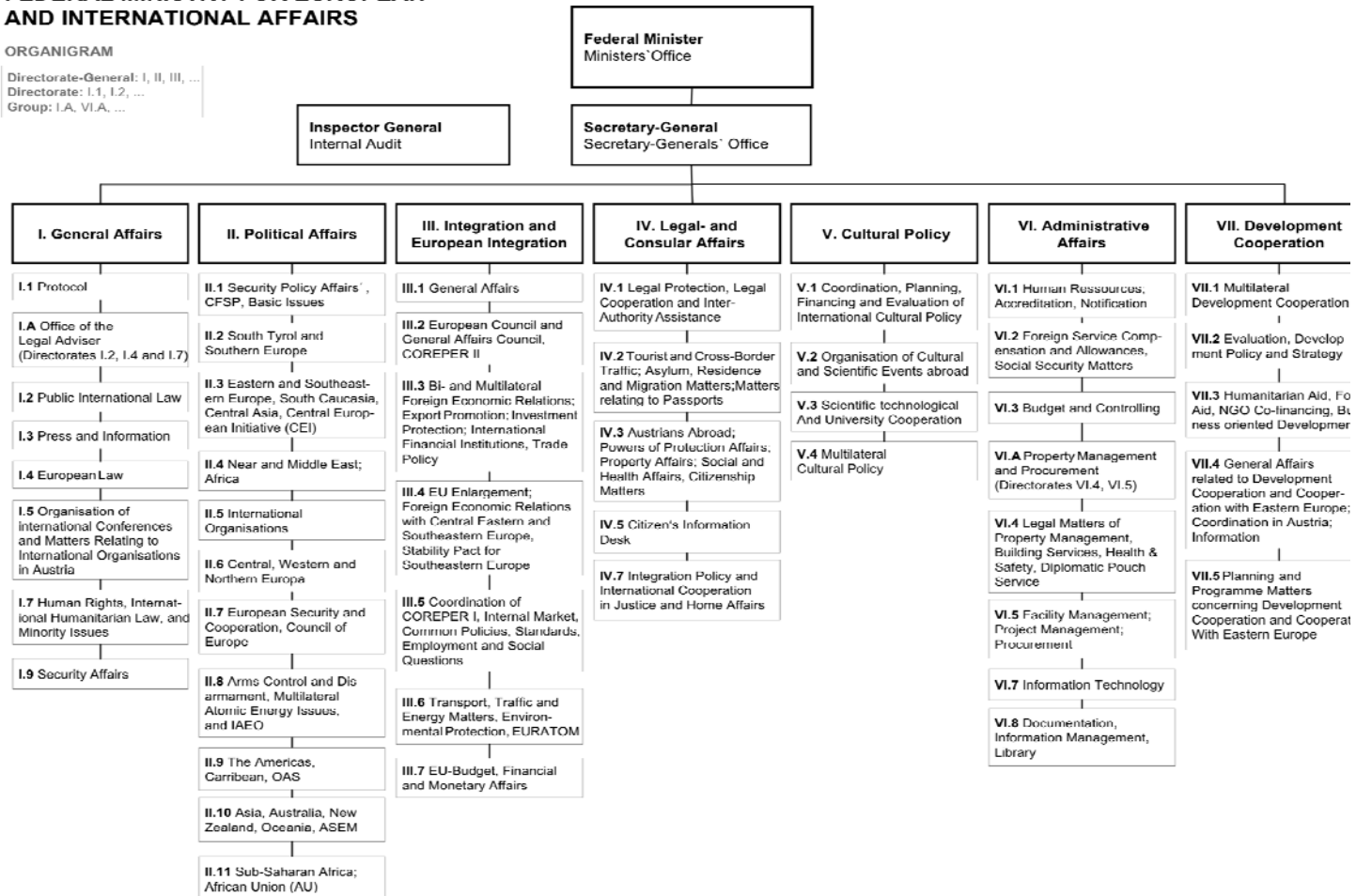
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Annexe I : Organigramme du ministère des Affaires étrangères autrichien

FEDERAL MINISTRY FOR EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

ORGANIGRAM

Directorate-General: I, II, III, ...
 Directorate: I.1, I.2, ...
 Group: I.A, VI.A, ...



Source : Autriche. Ministère fédéral pour les Affaires européennes et internationales. 2010. *Organigram*. En ligne. <http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/foreign-ministry/foreign-ministry/organigramm.html> (page consultée le 20 juillet 2010).

Annexe II : Comptes rendus des entretiens

Entretien 0

Représentation permanente de l'Autriche, Bruxelles, 22 mai 2009

Note: Entretien non enregistré; le compte rendu ci-dessous est basé sur des notes.

Professional profile and trajectory:

How long have you been working here at the Austrian Representation to the EU and what is your professional status? 5 years in Brussels

When did you start your career as a diplomat? 6 years ago (1 year in Vienna)

- if other functions before the current one, what were they? Worked for an NGO seeking to inform people on the EU. At the time of Austria's accession in the EU, was working in the Ministry of Social Affairs...

- what kind of studies did you do and where? Political science

Interview focused on his previous job in the COPS + CIVCOM

Frequency of meetings within the Council of the EU with your colleagues from other member states?

Daily, 4-5 times a week then, for formal meetings; in addition, informal discussions

How well do you know your foreign colleagues? How good are your relations with them? *Yes know well.*

Quality of relations depends....

Reports after every meeting, in principle but not always in practice... after COPS meetings though, reports are always sent to Vienna.

What do you think about the role played by France, Germany and the UK? *Their important role/place can sometimes be counter-productive... France in particular is very active.... Germany doesn't talk as much as the 2 other ones but does much more concretely actually.*

Do you feel like Austrian diplomats have a certain leverage within CFSP despite its "small" size?

If you personally are committed and your positions are backed by the higher level officials (and then there's consistency of the positions taken), yes it may be possible to play a certain role, to have some "leverage"....but if you, as a diplomat, just do your job the normal-minimal way, no there won't be leverage for states like Austria... It really depends of the individuals involved.

What does the Austrian neutrality mean for you as of today, around 20 years after the end of the Cold war? What do you think about developing further European military capacities?

Neutrality is totally irrelevant in the context of CFSP/ESDP.... It has had no impact. The EU will most probably and has always acted under UN auspice and in the civilian domain, so even if EU military capabilities were increased...

About "exchanges" of civil servants (diplomats)...

The Austrian MFA is very open to welcome foreign diplomats, but rather reluctant to send its own diplomats elsewhere. In general, the Austrian MFA does not really encourage the "sending" of its civil servants in the EU institutions (more or less what he said)...for ex, there is no national expert (diplomat) from Austria in the Commission... plus, the Austrian government grants very few resources to the 2nd pillar (don't remember what exact entity he was referring to but concerned EU foreign policy)...a comparison with small countries like Estonia shows that very clearly...Estonia grants more resources for its participation in multilateral diplomacy than Austria... few resources in the area of diplomacy at the EU level

About Austria's accession to the EU: Important changes for the ways of operating of Austrian diplomats in Vienna and in other European capitals? *Yes and no.... for sure at the operational level, there have been important changes, but for many diplomats, the older ones in particular, the EU integration has not occurred yet in their head....even 15 years after.*

Entretien 1

MAE (DG III) 19 juin 2009

Q: Do you communicate often with your colleagues from the other EU member states?

A: It could be more; we're working on it. Recently I was in Stockholm. I had an interview with my Swedish colleague and we talked about the European External Action Service. We plan to contact more now with neighbouring countries (Czech Republic, Slovenia, etc.) to discuss with them institutional affairs. We have a good contact with Finland.

Q: How often do you have meetings with your European counterparts?

A: Not often enough; we want to step it up. We contact indirectly via our bilateral embassies; we use our embassies rather than have contacts directly...

Q: How does the EU schedule impacts your work?

A: It commands a certain rhythm of work. ... (Description of work schedule according to EU big meetings: Coreper, foreign ministers, heads of state); European councils: always a very intensive period of work.

...

We have contacts with EU departments in all the ministries and, for institutional matters, with the federal chancellery.

...

Q: Do you feel like there is a difference between the diplomats like you working on EU affairs and others working on non-EU affairs?

A: The idea is that everybody in the Ministry feel that we are part of the EU. Coordination office + meetings gathering all the diplomats of the Ministry (and officials from other ministries) to prepare Coreper I and II. ... We have to avoid that only a portion of the diplomats are in touch with EU work... We tend to have a circular pattern by which those people working on EU affairs work on this topic here in the capital, then in Brussels and come back on EU affairs in Vienna. Only a small part of the personnel is really competent, so to say, in EU affairs. On the other hand, we need competence in EU affairs in all parts of the Ministry and that's why we have to motivate younger colleagues to work a while in Brussels, with EU affairs. We have to broaden the group of diplomats in touch with EU affairs.

Q: And do you see a difference between those diplomats who made most of their career before 1995 and those who entered in the ministry after...?

A: We had a couple of years back colleagues who tried to avoid doing too much EU work because they came from the pre-EU period. But this is not so much the case anymore. We have been long enough in the EU. ... ~ so that most people have had a first hand experience with the EU. But still what we try to get as many of our colleagues acquainted with EU work.

Q: Now concerning Austria's entry in the EU in 1995, how were you prepared...?

A: ... the training was the Treaty on the European economic area that we negotiated with the EC in the late 1980's before requesting for membership. This was a learning process on how to negotiate with Brussels and how to adapt domestic laws, etc. We did not change much in the ministry itself with the membership. But we increased the personnel of departments working directly on EU affairs. One year later, in 1996, we changed the structure of the sections; we invented new departments and this is how this department for general EU affairs was created.

... "Brain drain" with the entry into the EU: a number of Austrian officials experienced with the EU (during negotiations, etc.) joined the Commission, the ECJ, the Council secretariat, etc. so you lose part of your experienced personnel.

Q: did you have officials from other member states coming in the Ministry to provide training for Austrian diplomats?

A: I don't think so. I was the first one to bring into the Ministry a foreign diplomat, a Hungarian, when I started to work for the issue of enlargement. And it was complicated... their were worries related to security, etc.

Q: And so when you came back from Bucharest to work on enlargement for the EU, it was your first experience with the EU, right? So how was it to learn how to operate, etc.?

A: Well, I started to read books (laughs) and tried to learn EU law and get acquainted with EU law... it was difficult the first... it was a learning year.

Q: Austrian strategy about enlargement...

A: We perceived enlargement as a mix of advantages and disadvantages.

Q: Differences for you between working in a bilateral and multilateral environment?

A: Multilateral is always faster; situations change faster, you have much more factors to take into consideration and much more information to digest. When something happens, you need very quickly a report, an analysis on that. In bilateral affairs, it doesn't matter if you take 2 or 3 days to send a report. ... When we negotiated the EU enlargement... Time is... (very important in EU context). "Time and quick work is so important" (in multilateral context and especially the EU). When I was the representative for the enlargement WG, I would write the report the report the same day; we would finish the meeting at 6pm and then I would work until 2am to have the report ready and send it in the middle of the night, to make sure that when the colleagues start work in the morning, they have the full report of the meeting. ... the thing is you get better paid if you go overseas than if you work in Brussels. ... If you're posted in Santiago, not only you get better paid but you have much more free time. Some middle ranks counsellors working on EU affairs sometimes follow the work of 3 working groups in Brussels... ... Because diplomats receive, on top of their salary, an allowance determined by the distance from Vienna of the capital where they're posted, the climate of the foreign capital, etc. So Brussels in regard to these criteria is not worth much money; "Brussels is only hard work; that's the problem you don't get an extra allowance for hard work".

Q: About your work in the enlargement working group in Brussels in the 1990's...

A: Full-day meetings 2 times/week. Other than these official meetings, you have to organize the logistics of the papers, to make sure that you have all the documents, that you never miss a document, that you send the documents to the right people, that you self-read the documents + have all sorts of informal contacts needed – e.g. contacts with Council secretariat: so important because they organize all the work and if you know how the work is organized, you can guess what will be the situation in the following week or so, so you would have an understanding what will be the near future, what are the next steps, what are the next initiatives ~in the corner. It's so important to know, never to be surprised by any move by somebody, to know as much as you can in advance. And then you have to have good contacts with experts of the Commission, because the Commission is where the initiatives come from, and where most of the papers come from. And if you have the chance to discuss things with an expert before experts draft the documents, it gives you an enormous advantage, because not only you can learn how a Commission expert is likely to draft in this or that matter a document and would not take into consideration other alternatives. At the same time, you can try to influence it's way of thinking if you have a good argument on your side. And then you have to have informal contacts with all the other diplomats from the other member states and this is a lot now: it's 26 different persons. So you would try to understand their position; would they have a problem with some ? your planning to produce? And it's important to know in advance, before you make an initiative yourself, what would be the likely reaction from all sorts of colleagues; which would be the colleagues who would have a problem, who would reject it flatly, which would be the colleagues who would back it. ... All this information is important for the capital... because you always want to maximise... what the people in the capital have to think is how to maximise our influence on the events. So if you stick on a position nobody wants to buy, and you're completely left alone with it, you have no high chance to win that position. ... And if you harden too much, then you change too much your own position, you lose your own profile too much. So it doesn't make sense to change too much and adapt in advance to the positions of the others when you have no influence, because the you're only reacting. So you must find a middle way between what you want, you need and what is digestible to the others. And to find this out is a ...(tactical?) logic in a way. And the more information you have, the more ...? it will be. So what the people in Brussels do is not working for themselves but be as transparent as possible to the capital.

Q: in the working groups... what is appropriate and what's not? Meaning, for example, would you refer to national concerns/problems/situation to defend your position, etc.?

A: You have 2 sets of arguments: one is to say "this is bad for Europe", "this would be bad for all of us", or the other way, which is weaker, would be to say "this is bad for Austria" or your own country; then you have to explain why.

Q: Ok so would you say that often, "this is bad for Austria"?

A: Well it's always good to have a good argument. ... If you cannot explain why you want something or why you're against something, you're in a difficult position. This is part of the work in the capital to provide reasonable reasons why. And the better you can explain it, the better you can perform as a negotiator.

Q: Relations with bigger countries...

A: of course, these countries (UK, France and Germany) represent a large part of the population and of the EU so their point of view is of high importance. On the other hand, the huge advantage for the smaller

countries is that they always... working groups and meetings of ambassadors and the like are always inclined to work for a consensus. And this encourages the small countries enormously to participate. So it's not often that... in some respect we need unanimity anyway in CFSP, in enlargement it's always working in the basis of unanimity and this makes small countries very powerful because a veto from Cyprus is same value as veto from UK. And when you have in principle qualified majority voting, nevertheless they always try to win a consensus ... not to have to overrule other states' position. So in a way, of course the bigger states have more demographic weight, on the other hand nevertheless, the arrangements are so that also small and medium size countries have relatively high weight in some affairs... and in particular if this is something where a small state is particularly interested (or concerned: for example, if an issue touches on alpine countries, of course the EU countries concerned will then have more weight). So it means that smaller countries have to select which are the areas where they have a particular word or point of view to bring to the discussion. The big countries have an opinion on each and every subject in a way. So German representatives can seldom sit aside and let the others do the work because their country is affected by practically every EU discussion. On the other hand, if you come from a country like Austria, you have so to say the privilege to select which area where we have special, considerable interests. For example, when it comes to road traffic... on that subject, even if we have a small size, the point of view of Austria is of special importance and will receive, when Austrians say something, a special attention. On the other hand, about maritime safety for example, Austria doesn't have ships... so it's not nice from the Austrian representative to have a very particular point of view.

... But it's necessary not to run so to say, a policy of saying no to each and every thing. We would have such a position on atomic power plants; Austria is very strict concerning atomic power policy so whenever ... = no say policy.

Q: Turkey issue: how Austria has tried to make its position heard on this topic?

A: We ran a very high profile in this negotiation, absolutely yes. But on the other hand, we tried to avoid the trap that we have a "say no" policy. For example when we had the Council presidency in 2006, we conducted negotiations quite nicely and the only chapter so far finalised in the negotiations was under Austrian presidency. So what we tried to do is to be very open in what we want, so explain to each and everybody what we want: to negotiate with the Turks a special arrangement other than membership.

... since a small country... the danger is that you say something only when you have to defend your position. And this you have to avoid. You have also to come in with helpful positions, compromises even if it doesn't concern your own country...it is seen as positive... And this is something in which the big countries are very good; the British diplomacy for example.

The Brits often have a position very different position than continental states, but on the other hand, they make themselves helpful with all sorts of suggestions how to overcome a stalemate for example. Everybody is grateful to a British diplomat coming in with an elegant formula, suggestion ... and if the same diplomat on the other day has a difficult situation, it's much easier for him to bid understanding because he was helpful in other affairs. And this is what diplomacy, really good diplomacy works out. So not to be inactive most of the time and only step in the negotiations to push something only for yourself; this makes you very selfish, unhelpful. But if you maintain, even as a small country, an active and nice sort of diplomacy; the Irish, the Dutch and the Luxembourgers are good at it. They keep an active role – especially Luxembourg. There'r so many things and political fields of activity where Luxembourg is not important, but nevertheless they try to understand others' problems and come with suggestions and ideas and this makes them be seen as a very active and positive factor in the negotiations. And if they want something for themselves, it's much easier to get it...

Q: Are Austrians good at it you think?

A: We try to... we try to learn from countries like the Dutch and the Irish.

Q: Apart from Turkey and road traffic, which we talked about, what are the important issues for Austria on the EU agenda?

A: We are always very keen on social matters... things with a social impact... poorer people... we support policies of the EU directed to employment and the like. And also the environment, energy security...

Q: Finally, how do you perceive the importance of Austrian neutrality in the EU?

A: We do not feel that it's challenged. It was a problem when we came in... but actually it worked out quite well, so when the EU discusses about sending a mission somewhere (takes the example of Tchad), we analyse it and assess if it creates problems for neutrality; if it does we abstain... if it were completely unacceptable we would say no...

... we would see a problem in a European defence, a combined defence policy, a European army... this is something we could not go along with.

... so we are not unhelpful so far; on the contrary, we are pushing forward ways we can coordinate... e.g. equipment-defence procurement we first look at what all the European MS would need to have.

Q: Difference between officials' perception and meaning of neutrality and the Austrian population's? Doesn't it have a more important symbolic value for the population?

A: No it has not a symbolic value, I mean it is a very concrete policy, guideline. But what the traditional standing of some people in the population is, is that neutrality means you never mix and show interest into other people's problems; many people see neutrality as a policy line of staying out of any sort of troubles and would not understand why a neutral state is sending troops for this or that... nothing to cooperate with other armies and not send troops anywhere, so to stay out of everything. But this is a misunderstanding; neutrality is a concrete line of action to stay out of military conflicts and to do everything not to be drawn into a military conflict. But this is not so that you should not help in peace enforcement of something or peace observation things or to help in cases of natural disasters.

...

Against the Lisbon treaty clause of mutual assistance in case of war : Austria managed to include an exception in the treaty: without that exception, Austria wouldn't have been able to sign the treaty. Exception = Austria would be allowed to stay outside a military conflict involving the other MS.

Entretien 2 (Politologue, spécialiste de la politique étrangère autrichienne)

Université de Vienne, 22 juin 2009

Q: What was the impact of neutrality during the Cold War; would you say it created a certain isolation for Austrian diplomats...?

A: I guess what you have to bear in mind first, neutrality was a price, a burden Austria had to accept in order to obtain the state treaty in 1955. And that meant the restoration of full independence more or less – I mean no country is fully independent but I mean yes, sovereign like other countries. And it above all meant that the troops of the four occupying powers were leaving the country and that they would not have the final say on Austria's policies and politics. So yeah it was a price and you could say a burden, but Austria made it a virtue of necessity and so it became a relative asset. Of course, on the one hand, there were some limitations resulting from it; Austria for example could not, from a legal point of view, join a military alliance; so joining NATO was out of the question. And at the time it was also believed that Austria was not allowed to join the European Communities, given the high degree of integration of this or these supranational organizations. On the other hand, Austria was a founding member of EFTA, of the Council of Europe, OECD and also, that's important, a member of the UN. There were various arguments...and Austrian politicians, scholars, diplomats, tried the square the circle. And Austria used these platforms, in particular the UN, as an instrument, a platform of its foreign policy. And if you don't believe me, cross the Danube, you have the UN city, the headquarters of the UN, the Atomic Energy Agency...so ... especially under the chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Austria engaged in bridge-building, offering its good offices, mediation, participating in peace-keeping operations, acting as a protecting power. And so Austria found its niche and I think became a respected member of the international community. So on balance you could say Austrian neutrality was more of an asset than, if you will, an impediment.

... You might say there was an element of self-deception, but obviously this formula worked. And another piece of evidence, an Austrian was elected, Kurt Waldheim – he served two terms, as Secretary general of the UN...he was an Austrian diplomat.

Q : Less interactions... ?

A: No... on the other hand, Austria was a member of this N+N group and had more "interactions" with these countries (neutral and non-aligned) than the EC members.

Not an obstacle not to be a member of the community...

Q: ...

A: On the one hand Austria was a western country, but it tried to use its neutrality to achieve a certain profile as bridge-builder. And this was particularly obvious in the CSCE process, in the early 1970's...you had these 9 neutral and non-aligned countries and the East and West expected them to make themselves useful in the endgame, chairing meetings, coming out with compromise proposals. So I stick to my gun, during the Cold War, Austrian neutrality was more an advantage than a disadvantage. And certainly Austrian diplomats didn't feel inferior at the time. And this is psychological right, self-deception but you try to convince yourself and others, no you are not an outsider...you need us because if there's a stalemate we'll break it. ... On balance you could say Austria played an international role exceeding its physical,

military and economic potential. ..But this stopped; I mean after the Cold War the situation was quite different.

... Already in 1989, before the wall fell, Austria applied for EEC-Euratom membership, again trying to square the circle, thinking that, even as a neutral, it could become a member and since then I guess you could say that the main framework of reference of Austrian diplomacy, and increasingly so, has become the EU; the CFSP and ESDP.

Q: preparations for membership

A: More personnel shifted to the EU...Austrian diplomats tried to familiarize themselves with the EU... smooth transition... Austria had to wait longer than Sweden and Finland, which applied later for membership. So, no, no major problem, but increased attention, staff rise.

Q: Neutrality and the EU: how was their conciliation conceived before membership?

A: Well you see, the Austrian approach seems to have it both ways; to square the circle. Neutrality has become, if you will, a holy cow, part of Austrian identity, so the best way to commit political suicide was to abolish neutrality... so what you have to do – and this I regard it as very problematic – Austria wants to participate in all EU activities, at the same time preserving its neutrality. This you can read about in things that I have written and others; a close look was taken at the EEC treaty and you find article 224. It was argued Austrian neutrality was an obligation, serving international peace and stability, but it was clear this article 224 focused on the UN. So that trick didn't work and the Commission disagreed... Ultimately Austria joined; there was a joint declaration by the new members in which they declared that they would fully participate in CFSP and what Austria did was amending its Constitution. This was done on the occasion of accession and it was done again after the adoption of the Amsterdam treaty, where you have these Petersberg tasks. And so you find in the Constitution a provision according to which Austria may take part in economic sanctions and also in military crisis management missions, the message is without affecting its neutrality. Which of course is problematic but nobody discusses this in this country. ...WE decide what neutrality is... so we have it both ways and everybody was happy.

Q: ...

A: Petersberg tasks...the operations undertaken so far were military peace-keeping (maximum done), based on the consent of all the parties, and that is compatible with neutrality. That's nothing new; Austria has been involved in such missions for many decades...

In the Constitutional treaty and the Lisbon treaty...if you read this, all the means in their power (EU members) have to be offered to an EU member that becomes the victim of an attack on its territory; it looks like an alliance provision, looks like an alliance commitment to me. There are 2 solutions to the problem: one is the Irish clause...Ireland insisted (for the Maastricht treaty) on the inclusion of a provision according which the CFSP doesn't affect the specific character of the security policy of certain members states, which means neutrality. The wording of this provision is very general, but it's clear that this is about neutrality. And you find in later treaties too...so you find it in the Lisbon treaty. So all Austria would be to say we invoke this provision and therefore we will not subscribe to this military guarantee provision. But I mean, in a very Austrian way, we had a debate on the Constitutional treaty and since then the issue is taboo. But the formula was at the time, in 2004, which is really ridiculous...neutrality for us now means "solidarity in Europe (so we join a military alliance) but we are neutral in the rest of the world", which is non-sense according to me! But not for Austrian politicians and the Austrian public. ...We'll see how it will work out if the Irish say yes.

Q: presidency in 1998

A: looked at what their predecessors were doing...personnel exchanges... And it was taken seriously...it was a kind of graduation exercise; now we are a real member, we're not apprentices anymore, we have done it. It was not a very exciting presidency but I think the Austrians did a fairly good job. Same is true for the last time...2006...

Q: Would you say the Austrian foreign ministry adapted well to its participation in the EU?

A: Reasonably...you still have the political department, which is important and prestigious, but the DGIII (EU) is equally important; to be head of that section is a very prestigious assignment. I mean, it's small country with a small diplomatic staff, but given these constraints they've done a fairly good job. ... The UN is still important for Austria's foreign policy, now that Austria is a non-permanent member in particular... But national constraints are becoming more important.

Q: What's the importance of the EU relatively to the rest of the world?

A: The EU is paramount...if you're an EU member, an increasing part of your foreign policy is conducted in the framework of the EU anyway. There is very little space for an independent Austrian foreign policy say in the UN. Because the 27 try to agree on common positions and then this is presented by the presidency. But of course for country X the UN is not so important but it's rather important for Austria,

given that we have all these UN specialized agencies in town. So it is still more important than for other states.

Q: socialization...

A: this is very banal... if you're in a group, you will develop a we-feeling and it's us and all the idiots around us who don't allow us to do our job. So, depending on the personality, but... That is no big deal, that's kind of automatic. And if you're a member of COPS you behave accordingly and the same mechanisms are at work. Ask ambassador Kuglitsch, ask ambassador Woshnagg, he's particularly... he's a communication artist... It also has to do with seniority, if you've been a member for a long time you have more weight. Of course if you come from a big country you also have a lot of weight from the beginning.

Q: How would you say Austrians managed to have influence in the EU?

A: My general criticism would be that – we saw it when the so-called sanctions were imposed – Austria has done very little in terms of continuous networking. Austria missed the chance, right after the end of the Cold War, if you had reasonably calculated you would have said, these countries are going to join the EU sooner or later anyway! So let's show solidarity and perhaps... grateful, but this was not the case. And the sanctions happened, then all of a sudden our foreign minister discovered this sudden sympathy for the neighboring countries, but they have learned the lessons. We don't have – you have these groups...the Benelux, the Mediterranean countries... but Austria is fairly isolated, the way I see it. Which doesn't mean that on specific issues – you know this is lobbying...I want this, what do you want, let's add our concerns, let's support each other... this works reasonably well.

Q: The relations with the surrounding countries...

A: I mean they're fairly good... It varies, there are still problems with the Czech Republic for a number of reasons; relations with Hungary tend to be rather smooth. There are still problems with Slovenia. Germany, big brother, it really depends. Slovakia, relations are very good.

Q: Impact of governing party for foreign policy...

A: When ÖVP was in a coalition with FPÖ, they pursued the idea of NATO membership, which however they abandoned themselves after the operation Iraqi freedom...then neutrality was rediscovered because that was a very controversial military operation in this country. So I would say continuity... that's typical of a small country; I mean what can you do? ...And especially if you're in the EU, you don't have much leeway, you have to work inside the EU and increasingly so.

Q: important foreign policy issues...

A: The UN is still very important. ... Development cooperation; we spend very little in that. ... About Turkish membership, I would say all in all, the majority is very skeptical...so it's not an issue really.

Entrevue 3 (Politologue, spécialiste de l'institution diplomatique)

EIF, Vienne, 22 juin 2009

Q : change dynamics in diplomacy in general, not just in the EU...general picture ?

A : There are a number of changes...one of the key things is the information revolution, which had an impact on foreign ministries, who used to be, or tried to play the role of gate-keepers. With the information revolution, all kinds of actors are now involved in foreign affairs...it's basically an empowerment of different societal actors that are involved in interstate, intersocietal transactions...you might be talking about some kind of a society-zation of diplomacy in many ways. This is something which started a long time ago; I think already back in the 1970's...a Canadian scholar, ~James Ears...he remarked that it was now possible for anyone who was more or less savvy with communication technologies to have an external affairs department in his home basement. So this is one type of development. Another one is related to the rise of non-state actors in diplomacy, and their role in the delivery of foreign policies, in their cooperation with governments. And I think their role was very clearly seen in the Ottawa Convention on Landmines; there you could see the NGOs having non-diplomatic approaches, which were different than the negotiation style of governments; so there was a clash of negotiation styles in many ways. It seems to be very effective to the extent that they achieved the Convention and I think this was a great achievement... But the question is: is this a one-time achievement or a pattern? And I'm not sure it's a pattern, because there are other instances... where gvts (for instance the Canadian gvt) needed to distance themselves from NGOs promoting for instance xenophobic views. Another development is the media revolution and the related rise of public diplomacy – which is about forging a good image of a country – the activities of state and non-state actors that support countries' soft power. I think this is absolutely crucial. And then of course in Europe, the crucial pattern is

the European integration, which now challenges also diplomacy as one of the key functions of the state...the state within Europe is in transformation; state administrations are being interconnected and this creates a whole set of dynamics for diplomacy, which is an institution that establishes and maintains states in many ways.

Q: What's specific about multilateral diplomacy in the EU?

A: What is interesting... if you study European integration, you would intuitively think that diplomacy as a set of bilateral relations between states would be withering away, because public administrations are interconnected, they meet in Brussels on a regular basis...the Commission is involved as a supranational institution. The *acquis* and all kind of legal arrangements are being implemented by national parliaments. So where is really the role of diplomacy in the EU. And of course, this is something that, if one looks at it more closely – I've done that for instance with Brian Hocking in the article that we just published in the Cambridge review – the diplomatic representations of MS within the EU are not withering away; their functions however are being transformed. And this is an interesting development where you see a kind of reorganizing towards European affairs. Because bilateral representations within the EU – the traditional functions such as reporting on the national developments... those aspects are really diminishing; that is really withering away as a function of the embassies. However the embassies are working very closely on the European agenda; things that are being negotiated in Brussels, in the Council. And in the pre-negotiation phase, they are trying to influence the (receiving) government in a particular direction. Let's say the EU is going to negotiate the quotas for CO2 emissions, they work (the bilateral embassies and the capital) in relation to the line ministries of the receiving country that are in charge of the issue at stake, not necessarily the foreign ministry, and also other actors that might be influential...

Lobby: they've always done that. But the question is what do they lobby for and how do they do that. An additional transformation is what we have called a domestication of diplomatic representations, and that means, for instance, that the French embassy in Vienna has about 20 specialists not from the foreign ministry but from line ministries back in Paris. And they all work, as technical specialists, on their respective agenda and they're really effective in negotiating their specific agenda in relation to their Austrian counterparts (line ministries). So that's what we call the domestication of diplomatic presence because there you have representatives from line ministries... And as far as I understand, the French have gone furthest in this development... they figured out that it's important, even in the pre-negotiation phase, in the capitals around the EU, to have these experts from the line ministries, not only the diplomats. Because the diplomats might not be as effective in the preparation phases of the negotiations. Because once things get on the Council table, on the negotiating table in the Coreper, I or II, then it might be, or very often is too late to make any substantial impact on outcome.

...In general, I think the foreign affairs administrations have been under strain and under pressure, for the various reasons that I mentioned in the beginning: information revolution, non-state actors and so on. And of course financial constraints, because all the governments basically are trying to save money and the foreign ministry very often is an expensive affair. And it's not clear; the problem with the foreign ministries is that it's very difficult to demonstrate efficiency, because you have to be somewhere representing your country...very often the fruits are ripped several years later and very often it's difficult to really measure the impact of for instance public diplomacy. So they are under strain... and of course, what they're trying to do –I think it's usual for an institution which is well entrenched – is to try to reinvent themselves in relation to the new environmental changes...so the process of European integration represents a change in the environment, to which the well established institutions, like foreign ministries, are trying to adapt in their own way; they interpret what's happening in their own manner. So what they do...when European integration went further in the 1990's, most of the foreign ministries started to establish units of European integration. And that is their way to adopting the change...they have tried to remain the main coordinators of their country's involvement in the EU. They have started to frame the European integration process as an external affair, so that they would remain in charge and so on. So that is the kind of institutional logic that has been there all along and that is merely adapting to the new environment.

Q: distinctive features of diplomacy in the Council?

A: The distinctive feature is the law making that the Council is involved in. Because usually diplomats negotiate treaties and represent their national interests in IO if it's multilateral diplomacy. And what's special about the Council is that they meet very often, the Perm.Rep., and they usually stay there in Brussels for a long time (5 to 7 years), which also leads to socialization. ... Socialization processes in the Council; a lot of peer pressure to create consensual decisions... if there are instructions from the capital that go against the consensus that seems to be evolving, very often they would sort of distance themselves from their instructions and they would say, well I have to read this out, these are the instructions from

back home but of course... so this is something...the socialization effect I think shouldn't be underestimated. But the second thing is about law making: this is what Perm. Rep. in the Council do. Interesting aspect is that democratic accountability is very low, despite the fact that they're making laws... behind close doors. This is a kind of intersection between diplomacy and domestic politics, in which they find themselves and this is a distinctive feature of the Council.

Q: Austrian diplomacy...

A: I think the Austrian foreign ministry...what strikes you is the name of the foreign ministry: the Ministry for European and International Affairs. That is a bit unusual, still in the EU... But that is something where they try to express that they are in charge of the European agenda. I think it's part of the struggle of who's really in charge; they were in charge and have been in charge, that's what they trying to show.

Q: Ok. I was reading in the Austrian yearbook that this changed was justified by the fact that European partners are not foreign...Is it just rhetorical or...?

A: No, I think it's rhetorical but it expresses a notion that European affairs is not the typical type of foreign affairs, where of course within the EU, the danger of war has decreased dramatically. These processes are more or less semi-domestic processes within the multi-level polity of the EU. So in many ways I think it's an expression of that. And the Austrians were in this sense in the "avant-garde" in calling the ministry this way, because there is explicitly this notion behind it of semi-domestic affairs.

Q: Austrian diplomats...

A: ... I think there is group within the foreign ministry, which are professional, career diplomats, who would be less inclined to think they are operating in the EU in different ways than outside the EU. This is just a hypothesis, but I think they are diplomats within the Austrian foreign ministry for whom their professional etiquette/standards... doesn't allow them to treat a post in Paris or London differently than a post in Tokyo for instance... But also I think what is important about Austrian diplomats is that a number of them held important international positions such as Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the Commissioner for Relex, and there are people around her, in here secretariat, from the Austrian foreign ministry who worked for her, and I think this is an important socialization form where Austrian diplomats would be socialized into a more supranational mindset. There's also ... who is now the Special Representative of the EU in the Balkans. So having these relatively high posts in EU external affairs' administration provides the ground I think for socialization... It's not enough to look at the foreign ministry in Austria but also diplomats from the ministry working for the EU, in the Commission or the Council...

... in the foreign ministry, related to the procedures that you need for coordinating the position of the Austria in Brussels... There is administrative and procedural adaptation and with that comes a mindset, a special set of norms that are related to...

Also things like the Coreu system...administrative adaptation and also to the fact that there is cooperation in the working groups...

There are traditionally capitals, no matter out or in the EU, that are more important... the professional prestige of being posted in London or Paris has nothing to do with the EU, it is still related to traditional thinking...

Q:

A: When we were doing the interviews on the intra-European affairs and what the embassies of other MS do in Vienna. One of the question was what kind of CFSP-related agenda do they really talk to the Austrians about and how important is Vienna in that respect. Most of the responses were really Vienna is unimportant in issues of CFSP; if you're going to have influence on issues of CFSP, it's London, Paris or Berlin, but not Vienna. Because of their neutrality...I mean they are involved in CFSP missions but they are still Constitutional issues about this very often. So it's not clear to what extent Austria is still neutral; some argue it's still neutral because of the CFSP; others say well CFSP missions are usually mandated by the UN and Austria has a long track record of being involved in UN missions so that doesn't really have a bearing on neutrality. But for CFSP, Austria isn't really a player.

Q: Is it really related to neutrality or the fact that it's a small country?

A: Well, both I think; it's a small country, its military isn't really strong, it's a neutral country, so their military spending isn't really high. But I think there are areas, like the Balkans, where Austrians do have a lot of expertise... so I think there they have been playing a strong role. People like ... who was vice-chancellor of Austria in the 1990's, he's now the high representative for the Western Balkans. And he's tremendously influential obviously, lots of contacts and so on. So I think Austria does play some role in places like the Western Balkans. And also in Eastern Europe; Austrian banks have had a lot of investments in the CEEs. Also in Eastern countries like the Ukraine and Moldova. So there are certain areas of expertise.

Q: evolution of Austrian diplomacy from their mediating role during the Cold War...

A: 2 things. 1) Austrians had a lot of experience these last 20 years with the transformation of Eastern Europe; because the Austrian economy was tremendously involved in the CEEs; so Austrian diplomats they have a lot of experience and expertise with these countries. But also experience with the transformation processes... also related to the fact that they have historical interests in the area...so in many ways I think this is a region in which they feel they have their backyard; I'm not sure the others share their view that this is the Austrian backyard but in many ways they have a lot of expertise in the transformation processes... now in the Western Balkans...I think the Austrians can be good administrators there... Something else in which Austrians are trying to forge a role is cultural diplomacy. Because the Austrian foreign ministry was in charge of the EUNIC network, which tries to forge a common cultural policy of the EU in third countries. The Austrians are strongly involved in forging that. Emil Brix, was really someone who was promoting that initiative strongly. I think this is something like a niche for them to play this role of coordinator of cultural activities. Of course there are other countries involved in that... the French less so...

Q: relations with the surrounding countries...

A: The four CEEs, Slovakia, Czech Rep, Hungary, Slovenia, they are involved in the Visegrad group, which is trying to integrate the policies of its members. Austria hasn't been involved from the beginning; this was created in the early 1990's I think by Vaclav Havel...but the problem for the Austrians was that they were never involved. And why... well, in many ways, this is this idea of them considering these countries to be their backyard. And these countries trying not to come under the coordinating role of Austria again...that has been a contentious affair. The Austrians have had their own initiatives for Central European cooperation, I think in the mid-1990's or late 1990's; I think it was Ferrero-Waldner who suggested this European initiative...you would have to check the exact name. But it was to be led by Austria and then it would be cooperating with the Czech Rep... So they had their bid for a regional coordinating role, which however the CEEs have never bought into so far. So I think the Austrians have played a tremendous role in the transformation processes of CEEs... for instance with the Austrian public TV channel; this was the only channel, western channel, that you could receive in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Hungary. So this was in many ways the Austrian cultural sphere and also Austrian cultural actors were really involved in, especially in the 1990's, in these countries to spread the liberal values and so on; support dissident movements... Of course others like the Germans and the US were involved too, but the Austrians have played a tremendously important role. However, now that these countries are part of the EU and NATO – and I think that is an important point: they are part of NATO while Austria isn't...I think that creates a bit of a strike, you know incompatibility. Especially in the relations with the US; the CEEs were really pro-US for a very long time while Austria had its own views... the majority (among the political and intellectual elite) in Austria is more skeptical about the US...

Q: So would you say Austria is a bit isolated in terms of close relationships....

A: Well, I don't know if they're isolated because they're in the middle of things, in the center of Europe, and there are a lot of bilateral contacts going on, meetings of the central European presidents ... the prime ministers of the neighboring countries of Austria meet with the Austrian chancellor one or twice a year, so there's a lot of contacts going on. But it is, I think, ideationally, strategically, conceptually, isolated. It is not clear what Austria wants; it's not clear that the compatibility would be in place with countries like the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary, who are in NATO and have their own post-communist experience. But also Austria is tremendously successful in being involved with these countries, in investing in these countries; I think they're number 2 or 3 investor in places like Slovakia and Hungary...so they're tremendously involved. So I wouldn't call it isolation. It's more that they are met with a skeptical reaction, which has to do with the historical legacy of the Habsburgs... But I mean the Habsburg Empire was a good thing for most of these nations, but there are a lot of negative things in the collective memory of these countries about the Habsburg Empire.

Q: legacy of the Empire in Austrian diplomacy...

A: I speculate here a little bit but I think it's still there to some extent. And that has to do for instance with the fact that the Austrian foreign ministry has a different working time than the rest of the administration; because the usual pattern in diplomacy in the 19th century is that they would work from late hours until about 5 and then there was the ? ; this is also the case in the Austrian foreign ministry now, who works from 9 to 5. The rest of the public administration works from 8 to 4pm. So that makes for them (foreign ministry) to feel different than the rest of the administration. I think also that within the foreign ministry there are different old aristocratic families, who still provides...several of the ambassadors and diplomats in the foreign ministry are from these old aristocratic families. And of course if you look where they are

located; in these wonderful palaces! Obviously the everyday experience of being in these imperial palaces of the Habsburg Empire must have some sort of an influence...but that's again just speculation.

Q: neutrality for the public opinion...

A: It's very important because that's part of their national identity; that's absolutely crucial, that is what their national identity, after the WWII, was built upon: the idea of neutrality. And this is also something that differentiates the Austrians from the Germans, so that's why it's tremendously important for national self-feeling, self-perception/identity; for the notion of what is Austria, neutrality is crucial. So I don't think the involvement in CFSP will gradually diminish the importance of neutrality. I think the institution ...although it will be hollowed out in many ways and there will be cooperation and Austrians will be sending troops for CFSP operations, CFSP will be adapted and interpreted like it's okay for neutrality, because that's what keeps them up as a nation; it's one of the pillars on which their national identity stands. That's what they've been doing...I think it was in 2003, Wolfgang Schüssel came up with the phrase "solidarity in Europe, neutrality in the rest of the world"... but often UN mandate anyway...

Entretien 4.0

MAE (DG II) 23 juin 2009

Note : entretien non enregistré ; compte rendu basé sur des notes

Basic info:

- How long have you been in this current position within the BMEIA? – about 1 year
- Previous postings: deputy chief of mission in New York, Warsaw, Prague, London. Legal office BMEIA, Department for disarmaments affairs, UN in the BMEIA. Head of unit for Central Europe from 1998 to 2001. During the Presidency of 1998, chaired a working group for this area. – monthly meetings
- Before joining the BMEIA...?

4-5 years at the UN, in the Atomic Energy Agency and UNITAC

- What studies did you do, where and until what level?

International relations + Diplomatic Academy (mandatory if not a lawyer)

- Austria's membership in the European Union (EU):

How does your directorate relate to the CFSP and to the directorate of the BMEIA that deals with the latter?

The whole DG II on Political affairs is steered by the second pillar discussions in Brussels.

- According to you, are there significant differences between the diplomats of the BMEIA involved in multilateral cooperation in the EU and the diplomats working on regions or other issues not directly related to the EU?

There is no difference (emphasized that point from the very beginning of the interview). First, in the Political Affairs DG, all the directorates are related to the CFSP – the whole DG is meant to relate to CFSP – it is organized also according to the working groups of the Council (by regions). But second, the whole MFA actually has to bear in mind the EU framework/policies. An exception is maybe the DG for Cultural Policy. Besides, the Ministry relies on the rule that every diplomat should be a generalist and be able to work on any region. You have to be ready to work on any region from one day to the other. And "you can't escape the EU"... it's like using a computer...you can't escape it today. Those who were reluctant to working on the EU at the beginning of our membership have had to overcome this reluctance then. (funny thing...) It was often the same people reluctant to the new technologies in the 1990s who were reluctant to embark on this new work area that was the EU. But ultimately they didn't have a choice.

Everywhere in the world, EU MS bilateral embassies/diplomats cooperate together, and increasingly so...

- info sharing, reports sharing, etc. This is in part due to the fact that many MS – in particular the small ones like Austria – do not have embassies in every capital. And due to the strains on the MFAs throughout the EU (everywhere actually, budget constrains), such cooperation is bound to increase in the future... the External Action Service, which should be established with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, will most probably end up (although maybe more in the long-term... "I probably won't be there anymore") taking care of the bilateral representations of small or medium EU MS like Austria.

The whole ministry has weekly meetings on what's on the COREPER agenda.

COREU functioning:

- Access: to have access to the COREU, the sole criterion is security clearance. So anyone (diplomats, in Vienna or abroad) from the Ministry who satisfies the security clearance requirements can decide to sign up on the distribution list of the COREU system.
- Info processed through the COREU: preparations of Council meetings, of joint declarations, CFSP working groups reports, local demarches in third countries, relevant info/point of view to share with European colleagues... The Council Secretariat takes care of processing the info from the Council through the COREU
- Are there any guidelines/rules...(formal or informal) to follow in the way to use the COREU to report yourself on something?
Formal rules: "Are there formal rules...euh...I should know that..." (could not say then). But the informal rules are that you can report when:

"you feel you should comment on something important". Although sometimes you see some things passed through the COREU and you think "what's that..." (not relevant), but this is most of the time done by people not used to using it... new MS officials for instance. But we all do such mistakes at the beginning.

...

"it's a matter of common sense how to use the COREU". (and hence learned through practice)

COREU language?

It's the EU language actually and the UN-based language. We know, for instance, that if that or that adjective is used to qualify negotiations, it means negos have not been very successful...

Exchange of officials: More in the economic unit. Currently there's an official "in exchange" in the directorate on OECD. We receive more than we send people, but that's because we cannot afford, in term of our staff size (too small, lack people). We would like to send more people though.

Concerning Austria's EU entry and preparations

- How were you prepared as an official of the MFA to Austria's entry in the EU?; any kind of training, even for those diplomats not directly concerned by EU affairs?
- Do you feel like there's a significant difference between those diplomats who experienced the non-EU period and those who have always worked in this framework?

EU accession has had a very significant (or "enormous" not sure the adjective used) impact on the MFA and on the work of Austrian diplomats. The most significant change was related to the rhythm/pace of work, which became much faster: "The whole rhythm of work is marked by the EU" (not sure of the exact quote). In other words, the schedule is very much affected by what's going on in Brussels. If there's a PSC meeting on your dossier on Wednesday, you have to prepare the instructions on Tuesday for the PSC representative in Brussels and you know that your Tuesday evening is going to be long.

The MFA was restructured according to the pillar structure of the EU and, for the Political affairs DG, according to Council working groups. Before, it was basically structured around political section vs economic section.

One of the thing that changed also, as a result of EU membership, was that the MFA became much less hierarchical. We now have direct (and easy?) access to our superiors, whereas before, it was unthinkable to have such direct relationships...you had to take an appointment, etc. (don't know if she mentioned it, but the underlying idea is that you have to faster, be more efficient, which puts strains on rigid hierarchical systems).

The style of reporting changed as well, as a consequence of the need, in the EU context, to operate faster: reporting has been streamlined, compared to the situation before the EU membership where reports tended to be longer, etc. (similar point made by Ambassador Eva Nowotny, in Gehler book on Austrian foreign pol) The advantage now is that we can exchange our views with our European partners... an advantage at least in the bilateral context... makes you feel less (alone) in your job to have the possibility to exchange reports, etc. There's definitely more teamwork for Austrian diplomats now.

How was it at the beginning?

It was a mess! (not exactly said like that but meant quite the same... meaning that the first times were hard...there was a lot of adaptation to go through). At the beginning it's impressive (or so...discouraging also?) to see all this COREU information coming in; so much info to go through. And at the beginning you don't know how to read it efficiently, i.e. what information is important and which one is not.

We had some preparation of course, and reading on the EU (institutions, etc.)... But it's a lot of "learning by doing" (exact expression used).

Contrarily to the last admitted countries in the EU (CEEs), we began to be involved in foreign policy coordination on the date of ratification of the EU treaty by Austria. Which means that we started to be involved with using the COREU from this same date. We did not have the opportunity that Eastern Europe candidate countries had, to start being involved progressively in foreign policy coordination; actually, it was on our advice (and other states admitted in 1995?) that these states were involved sooner in the real functioning of the whole thing. And we told these countries all that I'm telling you now: it's really a lot of adaptation at the beginning, so we encourage you to get involved sooner in the process. We gave a lot of training to the CEEs candidates.

Some people, who were used to working in the MFA before the EU accession, actually never managed to adapt to the new working environment created by the EU accession. These people, for instance, didn't get used to use the COREU system efficiently

First Presidency of the EU, 1998 – during the 6 months, was Chair of the working group on Central Europe, which was meeting every month.

We were very well prepared for the presidency; we were closely working with the direction of the department (which contributed to the flattening of the hierarchies), we had weekly meetings... We didn't have really "training", but we were taught the "does and don'ts". Yes some people came from the other MS.

General

What are the skills you think are key to be a diplomat for the BMEIA?

... you have to be willing to negotiate, not try to push your positions too strongly/rudely. Anecdote: at some point these last years there was an official in the Ministry who had a Defense background (defense ministry?) and he really had a different approach... was really pushing/holding hard his position towards foreign colleagues. We were telling him: "that's not the way to do; you have to be more flexible, more willing to negotiate", etc.

... But skills/ways of functioning specific to the EU national diplomats? Like the fast pace at which things go for instance?

Yes the speed of the process is probably specific to the EU... although...(hesitation)...no no, actually it's the IT effect...everywhere it goes faster with IT. So, I think the job is quite the same everywhere. ... everywhere diplomats have to defend the national position while at the meantime be willing to negotiate/reach some consensus...

How important are the Americas for the Austrian foreign policy; difference before/after the EU accession?

One difference our EU membership makes is that we get on the "radar screen" of some countries (like the US) that would not otherwise pay attention to us. But since we're a member of the EU, that gives us more importance if third countries want to lobby the EU Council... they're lobbying through MS officials.

The EU membership adds-up an extra layer on our foreign policy... pre-EU diplomacy remains but there are some extra concerns...

Adaptation of the foreign policy

One of the implications of the EU membership is that we had to develop a policy on some regions/countries that we had never formulated a policy on (ex. Bahamas...Central American region). (beside the question of the *acquis politique* (not mentioned by her)), having a policy on every (or so) regions becomes necessary for our active participation in PSC (and Coreper?) weekly discussions...we

have, here in Vienna, to be able to feed our Brussels representative with the relevant info/policy direction for him/her to play his/her role in interstate meetings.

Before our EU membership, we used to rely on Switzerland and Sweden's respective policies on the regions for which we didn't have a policy.

Relations with other MS:

- Ireland, in particular, is a "friendly country" for us ("but don't quote this"). We tend to share the same views and we never find ourselves in competition... While with some MS, we're more often in competition... (didn't mention which one).
- Switzerland: due to geography and cultural similarities (language, etc.), we traditionally had a close relationship with Switzerland, but the non-membership of the latter in the EU tended to make this relationship less important in the last years. But recently, with Switzerland's adhesion to the Schengen area, we started to cooperate closely on consular matters. We are now going back to a closer relationship with Switzerland.
- One success story of our EU membership for our neighboring relations is the solution of the South Tyrol problem with Italy. Our common membership in the EU has had the effect of "dedramatizing" this issue and now we can handle it as a normal problem...
- Eastern European countries: very close relationship with them, facilitated by our common legacies (Habsburg empire): common legal system; common bureaucratic/administrative system... filing system, etc. (for ex. if I go to a museum in Czech Republic, even if I don't speak Czech I can understand the Museum plan from the bureaucratic system it follows, which is common to ours); same structures such as Registration of land by the state. Besides, a lot of Austrian businesses (and Banks in particular) operate in these countries... Austrian businesses, contrarily to Switzerland ones, didn't internationalize so much, but when the "Iron curtain" fell, they really expanded to the East (so economic commonality). For Austria (Vienna in particular) the Cold war was really a breach of its "natural heartland" (expression used). So it was natural when the cold war ended to expand to the East...but for such simple reasons also that many businessmen had family links with in CEEs. Nowadays, there's a partnership between Vienna and Bratislava in the industrial domain. Overall, we have a "general commonality of interests" with these countries. Which doesn't mean we don't have issues with them and vice-versa.
- Before their EU accession, CEEs candidates received a lot of help/training from Austrian officials. And we still help them today in some matters, like legal stuff...we are recognized for our legal expertise on the EU, so they (Slovenes and Czechs) asked us...

Neutrality: the EU membership certainly modified our neutrality, but it is still the basis of our foreign and security policy. ... our neutrality has always been understood in relation to the UN...if missions are approved by the UN, it's okay for us, whereas it's not the case for Switzerland.

Entretien 4.1

MAE (DG II), 29 juin 2009

Note : European Correspondent from 1994 to 1999

Q: Period 1985-1993 (interviewee was in post at the Austrian diplomatic representation at the UN); Austrian diplomacy in this period...

A: First thing maybe of interest... indeed I was in New York until 1993 and then, I came back and I was asked for setting up our... uni to participate in the CFSP, which to this day is the "Referat" 2.1a. This was the focal point for joining the European Common Security Policy. And we, in 1994-95, started to ... by visiting each and every EU member to see how they were doing it, to decide then how to organize ourselves... But I'll come to that later; now, let me start with an anecdote... has nothing to do with the EU membership but with technological changes. When I entered the MFA in 1981, we had 2 fax machines: one in the UN department here and one in New York. The rest was done by telex. Can you imagine? And of course no computers... began to be introduced I believe in the early 1990's... when I came back they offered me one but I declined it, I didn't know how to use it...nobody knew how to use them. Everybody got one as late as 1998, just before our first presidency of the EU. Now, changes brought by the EU membership...

You have to differentiate a bit between changes in Brussels, changes at the head office in Vienna and changes in our missions abroad and there again there's a difference between bilateral and multilateral missions. Changes here in the Foreign Ministry – and I can only speak for the Political part of the ministry, not for the Economic part – What we had to do in preparation for membership was first to decide how to organize ourselves. We knew that there was going to be a Political Committee – that does not exist anymore - which consisted of the Political Directors of Departments for Political Affairs, assisted by what is still called the European Correspondent, and that this committee would meet once a month in Brussels. And we knew that there were working groups organized on a regional basis plus a few crosscutting committees like disarmament... and that they would also meet once a month roughly. Now, things have changed drastically since that time... the Political Committee has been replaced by the PSC, which meets at least once a week now and is Brussels based... people from the capitals are coming(?). Working groups also meet much frequently; in the case of Africa for instance once a week, which again means that you cannot ...(?). So, at first, when we talk about the mid-nineties, we had to organize ourselves, to see how things should be handled, how to structure... what should be the procedures, what is the chain, if you want, of decision-making... We dealt with many more issues than before and membership meant of course that issues which were important to our partners became also of concern to us. Take Africa for instance, where Austria has a relatively modest network of embassies, obviously; we were not able to follow events let's say in Gabon closely, or Guinea Bissau or... wherever where we're not represented. Now, with membership, you had all of a sudden, through the network of COREUs, these telexes which connect all the members, we had all of a sudden access to a wealth of information, which you of course had to digest first of all and secondly you had to, uuh– of course you could still make national statements on let's say elections in Zimbabwe – but, but preferably this is not done, preferably it's done after consultations among all the partners, and of course, that takes time and can be more cumbersome than only national... especially when doing the presidency of course... the presidency workload is considerable in this respect. So, that has changed here.

The changes as regards our missions abroad have been most pronounced multilaterally. Of course, the mission in Brussels is a case...? because we are right at the center of events; it is by far our largest mission in the world and of course the day to day work there has changed. But it has also changed considerably in New York for instance where you have a very long and laborious process usually to find a common EU position – not on all issues of course but often. Which means of course that, our mission is heavily engaged in discussions uh internally so to speak and has less contacts with delegations outside the EU, because usually once you have an EU negotiated position, then the Presidency, assisted by the Council Secretariat, negotiates with other regional groups. So, in a way, to my mind, all this had led automatically to a weaker national profile in the UN. Because you only have the Presidency to... (?). So, less national profile so to speak. On the other hand of course, because of the weight of the common EU position, probably more influence in substance. Now, that does not include the Security Council, where the Permanent Members have their own particular status and there is no EU coordination as such ...(? ~but EU members would not take positions in the Security Council which are not in conformity with previously made decisions in Brussels).

On the bilateral level, things have also changed in the sense that you usually have in every country regular meetings of the heads of mission and of the counselors...it depends of the country, the posts and the persons involved, but usually once a month, where usually you have an exchange of views on developments in your host country. Then you may huhh... discuss joint report to capitals on certain subjects like the human rights' situation in the country or whether elections were free and fair and things like that. And uhh, but I would say, overall, bilateral embassies have been the least influenced by membership, compared to capitals and compared to multilateral missions.

Q: ok, so you, in your post in Africa, did you consult the other officials of the other member states?

A: Yes we had bilateral meetings of all the ambassadors... in which we primarily dealt with South Africa. I remember however – this was an aberration in a way – when I had the Chair in 2006, we had a crisis in Swaziland and we were asked repeatedly by Brussels to produce joint assessments of developments in Swaziland, but nobody was based in Swaziland and half of the member states were accredited to Swaziland though their embassies in Maputo (Mozambique) and half were sitting in Pretoria so it was easy to produce joint assessments. But there were other cases where we dealt with an issue outside the country where we sat (à verifier). Usually we would have, let's say... - I was also accredited to Namibia – but...? Other MS have their embassies in ... so they have their own meetings there, so when I could I would travel there and participate in the meetings. ... where we would...? no MS has an embassy in Lesotho except Ireland, so occasionally we would all travel... Pretoria to Lesotho to meet our Irish colleagues there and...?

Q: To come back on the UN...you said you had less relations with other MS... was it a big change...

A: Yes... I can only speak for myself... I was responsible for Political matters, so that meant also observing the Security Council, so of course I tried to have good relations with colleagues who were at the moment on the security council and who could maybe give me insights which I would normally not get. So, uhh... that was one area where...uhh things may not have changed that much because even now I mean my colleagues... once we are off the security council, we have to follow events closely at the security council. But in other areas (e.g. committees on human rights, etc.) I am sure changes are more pronounced... Because they (EU ms diplomats) spend a lot of time in internal meetings, so there are less chances to walk around the UN building and meet people.

Q: During the Cold War, since Austria is neutral, were Austrian diplomats kind of “isolated” according to you...?

A: No, I wouldn't say so. First of all, we cooperated with what we called “the like minded countries”: Sweden, Finland...? And we understood our neutrality not as passivity but as an active neutrality, so we were trying to negotiate, to mediate for instance. I recall one period where we were very active... was the Committee on the peaceful use of the outer-space where we had a debate between the Soviets and the Americans on the use of outer-space; the aim was to keep it as much demilitarized as much as possible. And Austria was... political channel... That was one area where I worked a lot, also to come to agreements which would lead to the adoption of a general resolution of the Assembly by consensus and not by voting. And most of the time we succeeded doing that, so.. no I wouldn't say that we were as a neutral country isolated.

Q: Ok, but since the EU accession, what do you think this role of mediation...uhh... how do you think Austria departed from that?

A: Now, in many ways, the EU is playing as such a mediating role or let's say trying to be helpful. So and... there are many countries who became more active, like Norway, Switzerland as well. And of course, as an EU member, you are first and foremost out to work within the EU and this requires in itself a lot of, uhh... resources; manpower, time. So by necessity I would say there is less ability if you want to have you own national ambitions or projects. But, I mean, we are still quite active in the Balkan area for instance... there we are players; we are not players everywhere of course... (fin pas comprise)

Q: Now, concerning your post of European Correspondent, how was it at the beginning to learn... I guess it was quite a big change...

A: It was quite exciting because it was an entire new way of doing things: constant correspondence among ourselves, monthly meetings in Brussels... uhh... informing colleagues here who had not been exposed to how things were done in Brussels (pas sure de la fin). Yes, it was a real – how shall we say – groundbreaking work for the first few months or so.

Q: ok, so for you it's quite positive, but at the meantime was it quite hard to get used to the new ways of doing things?

A: It was not that bad. The Presidency itself was quite hard, but uhh... I managed in turn. Overall, it was...(hesitation) was okay. It was a gradual... learning by doing and taking one step at a time...

Q: I guess there was maybe some lag between you and other people here (MFA)...

A: Well, I mean we are all by necessity quite ...? Since we are a relatively small foreign service... it does not really allow for too much specialization, so we're all generalists and used to doing new things. But there was a marked difference I think between those who had worked previously in a multilateral framework (e.g. ...) and those who had “only” done bilateral work; for them I think it was probably more difficult to get used to new ways of doing things in the EU. But I recall one case in particular one gentleman in particular who was quite skeptical but when we had the Presidency, he said “I love this multilateral work...”; so he was a real convert so too speak.

Q: ok, and what was the mood in the MFA towards the EU accession?

A: uhh... it's a long time ago! Uhh.. it's difficult to say, but I would say, overall, people saw it as positive. Some were maybe more enthusiastic towards the new challenges and others more hesitant, but overall...(repeat same thing).

Q: Ok, so when you came back here in 1993, what was done to prepare to the EU membership?

A: I travelled, with my political director, to all the EU members states capitals and we were just listening, asking questions: how did you organize yourselves, how is this done, how is that done, how ...? We would have an intensive day or so at each capital and then we, well, decide for ourselves how we want to do things.

Q: And we're you in charge of kind of training the rest of the officials here at your return...?

A: As far as the political part of the MFA is concerned, yes; we would, either orally or by writing, share our “insights” if you want with the rest of our colleagues here in the political department yes.

Q: Ok. And as a European Correspondent... how long in this position?...

A: till 1999.

Q: And how was the change from the European Correspondent position to a bilateral post? (1999 upwards)

A: That was quite a change for me because I had never served in a bilateral position.. never seen a visa! And the task was not so easy at the beginning because we had closed our embassy in Berouth... had to hire staff, etc. But it was fun at the end of the day.

Q: Ok, you didn't miss too much you position as European Correspondent?

A: Well, I had been there for quite a long time, so no I didn't miss it too much. Of course, I felt a bit cut out of the information flow... even with the most modern technologies, it's not like if you were here, where things happen. Yes, you feel maybe a bit out of.... But but there are other compensations, that's not bad.

Q: Ok. Coming back to European Correspondent position... the whole time you were in this position you were meeting with your counterparts once a month?

A: That's right.

Q: And how often did you communicate by other means...?

A: There was no fixed basis; we would call each other if we had a question or something, but that did not happen much often as I recall... I mean, the contact was mostly the European Correspondent of the Presidency; questions about the agenda of the latter, etc. That is more I think done, to this day, on the expert level so to speak...for instance, today if you want to talk to somebody in France on an African issue, you would not ask the European Correspondent directly, and that is something that was also part of the changes... this European network so to speak that nobody had to that extent... maybe you knew one or two colleagues before but now you have a knowledge of European experts (on African issues for instance) in more or less all European countries. And that took us – all of us I think - a bit of time to get used to that kind of network... now you can pick up the phone and say hello, how do you...

Q: And, at the beginning of your EU membership, was it self-evident how to proceed to launch a foreign policy initiative?... consult the other MS, etc.

A: That is a good question, which I cannot really answer you. I don't really recall it... my guess would be that it was not really difficult to get used to discuss things first in the European context. That is my recollection, but I'm not 100% sure.

...

So we would participate once a month in the political committee meeting and we would afterwards jointly approve the report of the political committee. So, we would stay behind and work on the report once... And then we would participate in Council of Ministers' meetings and we would also participate in the semi-annual summits of the European Council, because we always had a political committee meeting in the margins of these ministerial or prime ministerial meetings.

Q: Did you have many informal meetings when you were in Brussels?

A: We would have them on a bilateral basis, I mean we would have lunch together or a cup of coffee... Yeah, that was primarily based on mutual sympathy (small laughs).

Q: How, related to that, were your relationships with your counterparts...as a new comer?

A: Well, you know, when I did my tour and talk to people of course some were more ...forthcoming than others, some were more helpful than others and some were more fun to be with than others... So I think it depended on a lot on soft factors if you want...

Q: Overall question: what would you say are advantages and disadvantages of being in the EU, for your professional practice?

A: Well, difficult to sum it up in one sentence, but I would say, advantages: access to more information; bigger impact overall when there's a joint EU position, instead of the lonely voice of Austria. Negatively, if you want, on the personal basis or individual basis, a bit like of, less freedom of maneuver. But, maybe it differs from person to person.

Entretien 5

MAE (DG II) 29 juin 2009

Q : How would you say the CFSP framework/cooperation impacts your daily work ?

A : Quite a lot I think... It definitely has a big impact; it's considerable time and efforts for the department as a whole now, not physically myself, but people in this department have to spend quite a significant amount of time working with the various group formations of the EU and we also write the instructions for these various group formations so that also takes some time and then of course there is the Council of

Ministers, so all of this takes time to prepare. I have to say that, if I compare what I'm doing now to what I was doing in New York, it's a bit less here in the Disarmament and security policy sector because here we do have considerable differences between the EU member states, for example between the Permanent two who have nuclear weapons, France and the UK, and the rest who don't, so that... that does change a bit the policy of coordination on nuclear weapons.

... it's much easier to agree on something like human rights where all 27 more or less have the same uhh... access... everyone has human beings and everyone has to deal with their human beings, everyone has systems of law and functioning... there's the European Court... everyone has a very similar way at looking at things. The question of nuclear weapons, you have 2 states who have nuclear weapons and 25 states that do not and some of the 25 are dependent upon the nuclear shadow because their members of NATO or because they have other alliance structures. Some of them, such as Austria, are very strong anti-nuclear and therefore have a completely different view also as regards nuclear energy for example, the peaceful use of nuclear energy. So, in that context, we have much less coordination, because it's clear that for example France is not going to coordinate its nuclear weapons' program; Austria wants to dismantle it and have no nuclear weapons and France says it's indispensable for defense. So, there's very little to work for...

We still have coordination meetings, but we must very quickly come to the point where we decide not to continue because there's no point in continuing...

Q: Ok, but you still discuss about it, you try...

A: Well, we do have certain... of course, for example there are multilateral treaties, like the NPT treaty, where we're all members, which has 5 nuclear states and the rest of the world more or less. If we work on this treaty to strengthen it we will all sit together and have an EU position at the end of the day and try to see... and obviously states like Austria and Ireland are going to try to push for nuclear disarmament, whereas states like France in this context will say we don't want to talk so much about disarmament among the EU states, we want to focus on non-proliferation and about the other guys who shouldn't have nuclear weapons and so that's how we will find a common language. So there is cooperation in general but in strategic questions and military questions, that's more or less excluded.

Q: Ok. You mentioned Ireland... I guess it's an important ally...

A: Yes, well I mean, on this part of nuclear... I mean, in disarmament generally I think, we Austrians work very closely with Ireland, Sweden, uhh... those 3 are basically the most progressive... sometimes Luxembourg will join in, on some humanitarian issues also the Dutch will be part of this sort of very progressive group. Sometimes Portugal joins and uhh... sometimes Belgium is there. And then, there are other formations where other groupings will come together and you will have your allies for some...

Q: Ok. Do you sometimes meet you colleagues in Brussels...

A: Well, my department has 3 subunits and in each of them there meetings for each of the 3...there's nuclear disarmament, conventional disarmament and arms control-export control, and all 3 have their meetings. The first year I went to all of them but now I know what they do, and now I'm very happy that the 3 units chiefs go there and do that themselves. I meet my colleagues primarily at conferences on disarmament...we meet in Geneva for the conference on disarmament; we meet in New York for the NPT or we meet here in Vienna at the IAEA or the ? meetings for discussions over Iran and North Korea and that's when the directors will come together and meet.

Q: ... to what extent do you have communications with your colleagues by email / COREU or phone...

A: We do have some COREUs but that's more limited to, for example UN speeches, which at the end of the day become public knowledge. Uhh... if we coordinate ourselves on sensitive issues like Iran or North Korea we have to go to Brussels and we have these confidential meetings there, which are closed. Uhhm...other issues we will... Well, we have, we have a lot of disarmament work goes on in Geneva and in New York and here at the Vienna center as well, so there I would be in touch with my Austrian colleagues who work in disarmament in each of the 3 cities and then they will go for the local disarmament work.

Q: Ok, and when you were at the UN, to what extent were you consulting the officials of the other MS?

A: Well, there that was very much more intense. There we would meet... I mean there was the classical heads of missions and ambassadors meeting, which was once a week and then you had, I don't know, 3, 4, 5 consecutive or parallel EU coordination meetings every morning, everyday; on the various issues, each committee expert would meet in the morning; so you had everyday 3 or 4 EU coordination meetings happening. And you meet them literally daily, some colleagues, because most of what you do if you're at the UN, especially if you're following the Security Council, it's all about information sharing and information passing on. So you would be in touch and see your colleagues on a daily basis. Not only your EU colleagues, all the colleagues, because you would be in the same building, meeting room, and the

whole work we do is sharing information and getting information and passing it on, and and networking so, that was much more intense than here, from capital.

...What you have with your EU friends is that in the various meetings you knew you would TRY (emphasized) at least to have a joint EU position. So, what you usually did is that you, before a specific item was discussed, you would sort of contact your other EU colleagues to know what their positions were. Usually, the Presidency in any case, would have had preparatory meetings so that you knew there was a joint EU position and based on that, you would contact your other EU colleagues. If there was no EU position, which is very rare – in the UN I think 95% of all the items, there is one EU position and it's just the 5% for which the EU breaks apart. If you look at, for example there are I think quite a lot of studies made about the EU coherence at the UN and you can see the development of where the EU sort of develops together and on what issues they are apart. Disarmament is one where we're quite often apart, but most of the other issues I would say, they are 100% aligned on all subitems – international law for example.

Q: (scenario) how would you react if one MS acts / initiative without prior consultation...

A: Well, it depends on the context...it's very hard to say... the way that it works is that we align our positions on issues... let me take an example: cluster munitions. Cluster munitions is a weapon which works similar to landmines; Austria, Canada were very involved in the Ottawa Convention and the landmine ban process and... 2 years ago, we saw similarity of effects, namely that a lot of civilians were killed by cluster munitions, so we took the initiative, together with some other partners – Ireland, unfortunately not Canada this time ... - and we also had this coalition together with Norway, Mexico and Perou. So it was not based on the EU. We informed our EU partners and tried, of course, to get many of them involved but some of them were extremely reluctant and very much opposed. So, we had very, very, many brutal discussions within the EU; some were very difficult and very tensed and we just moved along without our EU partners and we started this initiative. Now, with the EU, after 2 years, we now have a convention on cluster munitions, which was signed late last year and now more or less all the partners in the EU have accepted this convention and now everyone is looking at it in a more positive light. But still, it was an initiative which started with the specific ill-will of some of the EU partners. But it's not that we would do this to surprise... everyone was involved at the beginning but obviously some have the interest to be in favor or not to be in favor and then you would go with or without them, so... But again, this is the disarmament sector where something like this happens. I recall that, almost under every presidency, some MS surprised the others by suddenly coming out with something that nobody knew about, so I think that's fairly... it happens fairly regularly. We try to avoid it by simply giving people advance notice of initiatives, but you know we all have our Ministers and the Ministers are looking for, for... things that they can do and sometimes Ministers can act very quickly, if there's an international incident... one Minister may jump forward and say "I will launch an initiative on this and this issue" and then you don't have the time to go through the coordination process. That can still happen. But I think what nobody would do is to come up... do something which is contradiction with an established EU position. That... that is something very rare and if it does happen... it does happen from time to time, and especially here, in the secretariat I deal with – in this case I can't give you any examples because they're confidential – but it does happen for example that you have arms' exports control sanctions, which the EU adopts against specific countries and where one or the other country may violate the sanctions, some of them willingly, some of them unwittingly and that results in some uhh... tense meetings and then we try to ~online everything again and bring it back...

Q: quid room for maneuver in your perception?

A: I think we do have the freedom to do what we want pretty much. Uhh...but we benefit from the EU partnerships that we have... there's fantastic information and we can sound out ideas first with others in a smaller context and so we have the same room of maneuver but, instead of, for example, running right into public with it or right into the UN general assembly with an idea, we will first run it by our partners, listen to what they say and if the feedback is very negative then we might drop it and otherwise we might have gone into it and present it on a big press conference. You know, I mean, the sort of negative effect if you want is that, in the years before joining the EU, Austria was very often, as a neutral state, a sort of intermediary who offered mediation when the Blocs, who had their positions, we could still stand up and say something and try to build a bridge between the various positions. Now, that is no longer possible because once you are inside one of the Blocs, the EU presidency speaks for you and so there's much less... your visibility in the wilder world becomes much less... if you ask, I don't know, an African delegate, what's the position of the EU, they will always know but if you ask what's the position of Austria they will not know because they make the connection between EU and Austria...they consider he latter have equal positions. Whereas if you ask them what is the position of Norway, they will not always

know, but they will often know, so they will know Norway is an active state, Canada is an active state and even though Austria used to be similarly active, now it will no longer be seen because much of our work goes into the EU and then it's presented as an EU position.

Q: Then... less prestige for Austria?

A: There's less Nationalist prestige – which may be a good thing ... less flag waving and less chess bumping, which in my view is probably a good thing. It's sometimes more difficult for politicians, when they realize their big ideas gets in the EU and so the gratification is no longer there. But this is a problem for all 27 MS, so we try to identify who does a specific amount of work for something...

Q: Ok, but is it frustrating sometimes to see sometimes bigger states taking a lot of place...

A: Yeah you mean some are more dominant... yes but I mean it's part of the system and we work with that.. I think it's not "frustrating" in the context where we know the French chair will be certain ways, etc. Now with the new states, there was some anticipation on how they would do that but we have over the past... my work at the Ministry has always been with the EU partners, so yes, everyone has its national characteristics of how he runs the show. But apart from that, it's an enormous stability... if you follow what the EU does you wouldn't have the feeling that every six months you're confronted with a different EU; that's not it, you're confronted with different spokesperson, with a different chair, with someone else who sells it to the others... the EU position...it's extremely (emphasized) mainstreamed. So, there's no real hard... difficulty to identify with the EU position...it's the lowest common denominator of 27 states, who are very internationalists, who are very involved to have a position on everything. This sort of position, it's fairly similar to what very many states have. If you look for example – we made a study on this at the UN mission in New York – when a new issue is discussed, you would have a couple of states coming in early, trying to set the tone, but very many would wait, very many would wait... you would have maybe India, Pakistan and you would have the US coming early, and then everyone else would look at what the EU does. And then you would have the EU bloc of 27 MS... pronouncing usually a very technical and ? statement which is just in the middle usually where a solution might be found. Because it's already the lowest... the solution for 27 states with sometimes very opposing views...? Then you would have a group of about 50 states who... agree with the EU. So that already says you have 50 + 27... so you're almost at 80 states who that view, no matter what it is you always have an average of 50 states that join us. And that becomes a very middle of the road position...doesn't step on too many toes... I know that some of my colleagues from smaller countries, who are not in the EU, had instructions "Just support the EU... no matter what issue".

Q: so for you, you would say CFSP is a "lowest common denominator" policy?...

A: That sounds bad but...

(interruption)

Q: Next question: In 2000, there was this Jorg Haider "episode"; you were in New York at that time: how did it affect your work? How did you manage to handle the issue in your personal relationships with the other diplomats?

A: Well it was interesting, we had uhh... obviously we were very much affected... we were in state of shock; we had join the EU, everyone had told us "These are our friends in times of need; when you're in trouble we will be there..." and suddenly we were ostracized and excluded, etc. It was, it was a bit... I must say that (small laughs), during these 4-5 months that it lasted, it was a very intense time obviously because at the ? we were suddenly again in the position of being sometimes a bit alone on some issues...for example on candidatures... the EU doesn't support each others' candidatures but there was uhh... France specifically put in one clause into the sanctions against Austria that said that the EU should not support uhh candidatures from Austria. That was something new; we don't have any positive support, but this time it was specific, you had to not support Austria. That was new, and since the EU that's a lot of...? it made a big impact. On the other hand, I have to say that, to our big surprise, we never got so much support for our candidatures during this time. ... Because there was enormous solidarity from all those states who felt that sometimes they had been unjustly singled out and sanctioned, so while normally we had our elections... some were good and others were not, we won all our elections... we defeated even France which was... And I must say I was very surprised by the diplomats of the EU; I think that maybe with the exception of 3 or 4, who were personally sort of made a point of keeping their distance, I'd say the vast majority, almost all of them, were specifically nice to us, saying "look, we know this has nothing to do with you, and we're sorry about this" and I remember that the next day or so after the sanctions, my French colleague – the French were very much behind us – invited me for lunch and said "I don't know what's going on but that shouldn't affect our work and our relations". I thought that was very nice. So, the colleagues and the work in the substance more or less went on as before. But, we as Austrian mission, we were under shock because we we're not used to this and we were horrified. On the other hand it gave us

access to support from states that might not have supported us. And what it really did was it really shook us awake and made us, all of us, realize that we have to do everything to...? The EU was so easy, everything was being done for you, you don't have to hold your own statements. So we became very active and made sure that we were everywhere; we went to all the meetings...didn't rely on the Presidency report, we went there ourselves, we reached out... we had parallel discussions... we knew ...afterwards.? So we became very active, much more active than before EU membership, because suddenly... how should I put it...Before the EU was a big partner and friend, now it was someone who was a little bit hostile, so you know we were very worried about this and we had to know what was happening. So during that time I think it was probably the most intense period work-related period at the UN where we were trying to make sure we were doing our job just as well as before.

Q: Ok. Finally what would you say is the difference between working in the UN and EU environment...
 I've been in Brussels many many times on meetings and I know how they work there...it's much more intense, you fight against each other to find a position. In New York, you have the world out there and your job is to explain your position, to come up with something that you explain to others. You have your guidelines from Brussels and now you have to fit them into the wilder world and you realize that very often they don't work because something that is agreeable to 27 European states is ?not necessarily agreeable with for instance Pakistan, Iran... so then you have to try to translate it, get as much as you want... (vérifier propos). The difference with individual missions is that in Brussels you fight one another to get your position I; out there we have to work together to get our message cross... So I think the coordination is much more difficult in Brussels because it's antagonistic, whereas in New York ... you have one common – it's not an enemy – but a group out there you have to convince. And here you focus very much on obviously what your country wants and you try to fit it in the EU... the first thing is you ~throw it at Brussels and you try to put as much as you can to the common EU position and then, when it goes on to the wilder world and it goes to New York or to Geneva, etc. then you go up and you say "I know out of Brussels you got this and that but when you were sitting in those meetings...try to sneak it again on this point...we lost that in Brussels...I know that in the UN there are many states who will want that so why don't you try and come with that again.

Entretien 6

Vienne, ÖGFE, 30 juin 2009

Q: I would like to know, during the period spanning from the 1950's to the 1980's...

A: I entered the foreign service in 1955. The occupation by the 4 allied powers had already ended. I grew up as a diplomat, as an Austrian civil servant, at a time when Austria's foreign policy was determined by 3 decisive factors. First, the Austrian state treaty of May 1955, then the Constitutional Law on neutrality on 26 August 1955 and membership in the UN in December 1955. These were the 3 main pillars and they determined also my activities as a young diplomat. Without going into all the details, when you start out your career you have to do practically everything; you have to do consular work, you have to do social work, you have to write press reports, you have to observe the media as far as Austria is concerned. All these things...of course you don't have any decisive influence on these topics, but they are part of your work. Yet if you ask me what are the main features that determined my outlook on foreign policy of Austria at the time, these were the three. But then very soon came the awareness that Austria had to take part as closely as possible in the European integration process.

Q: When was that?

A: In the sixties, when we joined the EFTA. Because at that time we felt that our neutrality did not permit us to become a member of the emerging European Community. So consequently, we chose, together with Sweden, Finland, the UK, Norway and Switzerland, the EFTA road. And that, at that time was all we needed. But we were aware, and very soon we became aware of the fact that this would not be enough in the long run.

Q: Why wouldn't it be enough? In terms of economic benefits or...?

A: Economic, that's right, yes. But also probably because we felt that what evolved in Brussels and in the ECs at that time was the political outlook. We realized that what the EC wanted was not only a very strong integrated economic undertake but it also meant a political orientation and political implications. And that for a while prevented us, as a neutral country, to join. But then we came to the conclusion we had to take that road towards the EC in a much more decisive way. And that, the... shall we say, the decisive period on that road were the years 1987-1988. There we realized the EC was getting stronger and stronger, was getting much more important, so we felt we had to join in order to really take part in European integration

in its entirety, in its...yeah, in its entirety. It was not sufficient to have these EFTA arrangements, but we felt that we had to go all the way.

Q: Would you say there was a certain feeling of “isolation”?

A: No, no, not isolation. But we felt that as a country like Austria, that was in the middle, in the center, for centuries really, of Europe, for better or for worst, we had... our place was in this newly emerging organization that EU, or at that time still the EC, represented. It was more than economic interests; it was more than, shall we say, political interests, it was really a feeling that our place, our historic place, as Austria, in the middle, in the center of Europe... that Austria had a place in the uh...

Q: But I guess this entailed a different conception of neutrality? ... Would you say that as the years passed, neutrality was less rigorously observed...?

A: Well, you know of course the text, you know the words of our law of neutrality, which focuses on 2 elements: no membership in a military organization, a military alliance, and secondly, no foreign military basis on Austrian soil. These were the 2 main pillars. Yet, what you are alluding to is absolutely right. Our policy of neutrality was interpreted in a certain way, in a very strict way, in a very wide way, during these years in 1960's, in the 1970's and partly in the 1980's. But then we came to the conclusion we had to focus on these two pillars, as I said... and consequently, we said, as long as we preserve that, and we had to preserve that because it's a Constitutional Law, and nobody cast any doubt on the importance of the Law on neutrality. Yet, everything else, we can do together with the European Community. As long as these 2 points, these 2 factors are not in danger. So, all our negotiations with the EC, especially our accession negotiations, also focused on these points: what can we do with the EU without endangering or jeopardizing our neutrality as far as these 2 basic requests, these basic stipulations, are concerned.

Q: Ok. And when you arrived in 1987 in Brussels, was it clear then that Austria wanted to apply for membership?

A: Absolutely, yeah.

Q: So your mandate was, I guess, to...

A: To prepare the ground, yes. To prepare the ground and to solicit, shall we say, a positive atmosphere towards Austria, trying to explain our position. In 1987-1988, all working groups, all study groups in Austria came to the conclusion that only full membership in the EC would serve our national interest, in its entirety. Of course, we also had our concern, agricultural policy... Yet, it was clear 1987-88 we would ask for membership in the EC. That was something that the EC, the 12 at the time, didn't like particularly. Because they felt the EC had to deepen first, become more efficient in its work. And secondly, there was also the internal market was supposed really to... of course it became a reality in 1992. The famous white paper on the internal market, which was to be put into practice in the years coming up to 1992-1993. And so... at that time, the EC was not interested in enlarging and expanding. And from their point of view they were right; if the Austrians should apply for membership, we cannot possibly stop that. Because Austria is such an integral part of Europe; what could we, the EC, tell the Austrians, no you have no place in the EC. They realized that. But they also realized, and they were right in that assumption, if the Austrians apply for membership, then the others will follow. And it is true that Norway followed, Switzerland followed, Finland... So as an alternative, we were offered the European Economic Area (EEA). We did not bite, we could not possibly reject this idea, yet we also stayed the course, and on the 17 July 1989 we applied for membership. And from there on of course, everything went its way.

Q: From 1987 to, let's say, the end of the Cold War, did you meet mostly with Commission officials?

A: yes... but you have to prepare that on the broad front; we talked to the members, we also tried to find out what the Soviet reaction would be and very soon we saw that they didn't like the idea, but on the other hand, as long as we stuck to our neutrality, the Soviets at that time accepted our march towards the EC. So, it was of course... we had, as far as our preparatory work for our accession negotiations, we talked practically to everybody, in the capitals of the then 12 MS, with the European Parliament, with the European Court of Justice, in the Commission; the Commission was probably our main partner in that stage.

Q: Did you feel reluctance from MS?

A: No, no, that changed... yet there was a period of reluctance from MS. And also in the Commission... Jacques Delors he didn't like the idea at the beginning, for the reasons that I just explained; because at that time Austria was undoubtedly the most courageous country outside the EC, that said no, we would like to join, in spite of reluctance on the part of the EC, but also on the part of others, shall we say at that time, because it was before the fall of the iron curtain, it was before the fall of the Berlin wall; so before the break of the Soviet empire; it took political courage. Yet, in the end, our policy was accepted and served, shall we say, as an example to other countries, Sweden, Norway, Switzerland...

Q: And the end of the Cold War...did it accelerate the process? What was the impact?

A: Well, I think at that time, we had already mapped out our strategy and I think the Community too; they were not particularly influenced; it probably facilitated. It levitated a political pressure to the extent that it existed. Yet, what really mattered was that the Commission had come to the conclusion that we had to work on the Austrian application for membership and we had to work out an avis, the famous avis, that was handed 2 years after we presented our application. So we, I received that in July 1991. And that was a very very positive avis. They said, okay, there are maybe some concerns but we are sure that Austria will be a faithful and trustworthy...of the community.

Q: Ok. But it seems that it took some time before the negotiations started...in 1993...how come?

A: Because there was a certain hesitation. It was still not completely uh, shall we say... this hesitancy accompanied our application for membership. To the extent that they felt "we hope that the Austrians are aware of the fact that we are primarily a political organization; we, the EC is primarily a political organization; that we try to develop a European Union, a political union in the long run. And our economic negotiations, our economic interests, only served that purpose; to evolve towards a strong political organization, including a Common Foreign and Security Policy. Now, also, we had to learn that process, sure. Yet, as I said before, we thought we have a place in that organization and so we will do everything to make sure that we will become a member and a trustworthy member, with all points that were maybe slightly problematic could be taken care of in the membership negotiations. And then it's true, the membership negotiations started in 1993 and were concluded in 1994.

Q: Before talking about the negotiations per se, the neutrality issue... so, how contentious was it for the other MS this particular issue of neutrality, related to the Common Foreign and Security Policy? Did you have to really convince that neutrality would be... Because it seems to me that was some reluctance on this point and that the Austrian government had to change its position on that..?

A: Yeah... you're quite right, you're quite right...our policy of neutrality changed. But it had nothing to do with the essence of our neutrality. I would like to stress that point: Austrian neutrality was never considered, from the very start, a nice caussy caution, on which we could lie back..well, the rest of Europe they can do whatever. They can do whatever is necessary to safeguard European interests; we are going to lie back, the Austrians, and see what others can do for Europe and for us. That, from the very start, was not the intention of Austrian neutrality; we know exactly how it came about, that it was something we had to promise, that we would become a neutral country. That is true. But, we also felt that we had a role to play in, shall we say, international peace keeping. So as of 1961, Austria took part in international peace keeping operations in the Congo and in the Middle East, in Cyprus, name it! So, Austrian neutrality was interpreted in the way that we would choose the field of our international action where we felt that we could make a positive contribution. And I think this was accepted. And in the course of these 40-50 years, Austria had about 70,000 soldiers in the field; everything on a voluntary basis. Nobody was sent on the Golan Heights; yes they were sent there but only on a voluntary basis....and this is a very important point. So, we changed our policy of neutrality without changing the essence of our neutrality. And this is also what was reflected in the Avis...

Q: Ok. And during the negotiations, how did it go...more specifically, what were the most difficult issues to negotiate?

A: Well, at that time, as of 1994, I was back in Vienna, so I coordinated for the Austrian foreign ministry our position for the negotiations. The most difficult thing was undoubtedly agriculture; how would Austria fare as part of the Common Agricultural Policy? What would that mean for Austrian agriculture? That was not solved until the very end of the negotiations, but we found a solution, which certainly did justice to our interests in that field, but on the other hand was also very positive for Austrian agriculture. The second thing was transit through Austria, especially from Germany to Italy, that was a very very difficult issue. Because the free communication was a very important and essential part of European policy. So the Community, and the Commission, had a hard time to find a reasonable compromise with Austria. And we did: an agreement that we found a new approach combining the interests of the truck drivers shall we say and environmental concerns. And that was fairly well but not much more. Then, a third point was what we already discussed, the question of neutrality, what would that mean, would Austria take part in a CFSP and we said YES, to the extent that our Law on neutrality permits this, we will do so. And this was accepted by the Commission, in the avis, but also in the course of the accession negotiations. Then there were the secondary residences bought in Austria by wealthy Germans...

Q: How was the relation between the foreign ministry and the other ministries during the negotiations and during the preparations to membership? Was the foreign ministry at the lead the whole thing?

A: Well not altogether; together with the federal chancellery, We coordinated all this. We had an arrangement with the federal chancellery, which worked out quite well. But also on the basis of good

personal relationship with my counterpart in the federal chancellery. So that was all right. But it took a while, yes it was not always easy. Yet in the end it worked out well.

Q: What was done in the ministry to prepare for membership? In terms of bureaucratic organization...

A: Well, I'm not sure. So many things... First we had to expand and enlarge our staff in Brussels. At the time (in Brussels) we were already over 100 civil servants from all segments of Austrian society, social partners...all had their representative...the environment people... as part of the Austrian representation to the EC. ... I think it was true for all ministries; they all had their representatives there... It provided us with a sense of security ... if something happened in Brussels we could react here (Vienna); we had weekly coordinating sessions with the social partners...under the chairmanship either of my colleague in the federal chancellery or myself.

Q: Did you go in other foreign ministries in the EC to see how things were done?

A: Yes. But that was not, as far as I can remember, a very important part of my work. But I did travel to other countries to find out what their feeling was toward particular issues that we attached particular importance to (i.e. Spanish worries about agriculture...). But many things were played out, maybe also for psychological reasons... As soon as everybody knew, and this is really one of the lessons, when you know what you want, then you can go your way and you'll get it. If you hesitate, if you are not sure... But clearly it will involve compromises. Without preparedness and willingness to accept compromises, things will not work. And that we have found out very soon; that we had to accept certain solutions which were not entirely in Austria's exclusive interests. We could live with it and the EC also could live with it. And that is something that is I think an enormously important element also in our negotiations, our experience. The Commission, as you know, they're highly competent, highly devoted, highly paid. They were interested in finding solutions in our negotiations. They did not, they were not interested in confrontation; they did everything... they tried to find reasonable compromises. And they were very very important. And very faithful and trustworthy partners in our negotiations.

Q: Ok. So as I understand, MS were more reluctant.

A: Yes, yes you can put it like that.

Q: How were were officials of the Ministry prepared for Austria's EU membership?

A: Training, not really, No, no...we were thrown into the cold water (laughs) of the negotiations and we had to learn also maybe the hard way when it comes to languages . It's all right to say my English is perfect...but then you dig a bit deeper and you find out that English is an extremely difficult language (especially for the officials from the other ministries, used to speaking German). When it comes to French...at that time – I was in Brussels from 1987 to 1993 – we spoke French when we sat at the table... that changed; now of course it is English... Helmut Kohl, who was one of the greatest European that we have had in Europe in the integration process... when it came to German.... In these ministerial Councils, everybody speaks in his/her mother tongue... The French were thinking oh no, another German speaking country is coming...

Q: What was the mood in the ministry towards EU accession? Were people enthusiastic or a bit reluctant...?

A: It took a while. In the beginning... because as I said, neutrality was such an important element in our foreign policy; they were concerned, particularly in the foreign ministry, that Austria's neutrality would be endangered. Or could not be safeguarded. But that was fairly quickly uh... shall we say, taken care of that argument. Because, we said, we have to try to work in solidarity. That is, I think, the new word that we understood fairly well and fairly soon; that in a new...that as we are building up a new Europe, and it is a new Europe in many ways, solidarity between the countries and between the people and also between national interests, that solidarity becomes a very very important factor. So neutrality, fine, but when it comes to the question of helping others, we cannot expect to be helped without being prepared also and willing and enthusiastic really, to help others.

Q: Reflex of coordination, of consulting partners in the EU...was it easily integrated in practices?

A: Yeah, I think so. I don't think there were really any major issues where we had difficulties with the concept of a common foreign and security policy. Partly because it is still intergovernmental. It is not really...the only segment in European integration is as you know that we don't have a Common foreign security policy...everybody goes his own way... in some instances working common positions successfully but in other issues it's impossible, e.g. Kosovo. Yet, still, it should not be underestimated. We had a number of issues where we see eye to eye, especially things that have to do with enlargement... all this done on the basis of unanimous decisions. Also when it comes to Turkey, all the decisions were unanimous... The main point is that everything has been decided unanimously on all these issues and we should not underestimate what we have done in that field, in spite of all the difficulties. ... military

intervention in Iraq; I still think the French and the German were right. We were rather reserved on that, as far as Austria is concerned. We didn't want to get involve.

Q: Which countries are closer allies of Austria?

A: It depends on the issue. When it comes to the transit question, Portugal and the Netherlands don't care, so we have to fight with others.... But it really varies. Because of our common language with the German, it is very easy to communicate, so we would probably ask for the German opinion. But that is true for other countries too. But it would be easier for a minister to call his/her German counterpart and to ask "how do you feel about it?", and this can be done very quickly. With Hungary, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, we're also in close touch on a number of issues. With the Czech Republic we have difficulties because of nuclear power installations near the Austrian border.. .difficulties emerge from time to time. Yet, this is highly exaggerated to my mind. We have found a working basis with the Czech Republic. What is more worrying is that the head of CR, Klaus, still objects to the treaty of Lisbon. Because the treaty of Lisbon is, to my mind, the most important step that the EU has to take in order to move into the future, as a functioning organization. But we will see the German Constitutional Court will decide today... It should be said again and again, we have clarified a number of things with Ireland so that they should not be concerned with neutrality and abortion, etc.... because it has nothing to do with the treaty of Lisbon.

Q: What do you think about euroskepticism in Austria...?

A: ... Viennese are complaining all the time... Yet, there is a hard core of opponents but the majority accepts our membership. ... My conviction is that Austria has no alternative but to be a member of the EU.

Entretien 7

MAE (DG II) 30 juin 2009

Q : Basic info...

A : 4 years in this position ; before, counselor at the Austrian embassy in Rome, responsible for economic affairs, EU affairs, legal affairs...this sort of things. Before that, I was working in our NATO mission in Brussels and before that I was working in the disarmament department in Vienna.

Q: So were you in the Ministry in 1995 when Austria joined the EU?

A: Actually no, I wasn't yet in the Ministry. I entered in 1996, just after...

Q: Ok, so first of all, what is the frequency of communication with your European partners?

A: That depends a lot actually... we, as far as security policy is concerned, we are maybe in a bit of a special position because in Brussels there is the Political and Security Committee, the PSC, and so most security policy matters are actually handled by the PSC in Brussels and by in subcommittees: the Political and military group, the Committee for civilian crisis management and the EU military committee and so on... so we hardly ever...we don't regularly go to meetings in Brussels where we would have direct contacts with our colleagues sitting in the other capitals. It's a bit different for most of the other departments, at least here in the political directorate, because they still regularly have meetings in Brussels of the various Council working groups. For example, Co-Africa, they meet certainly a couple of times per presidency – I'm not really sure about the frequency – in capitals' forma in Brussels. So there are definitely contexts on the regular base – I would say the most is probably 3 times per semester... uhh between the experts coming from capitals. And what is happening in the Security policy sector is that once or twice in a semester – in the presidency - there are like informal meetings of security policy directors, but there're more on "on and off" basis and strictly informal. And of course, once you don't get to meet your colleagues from other capitals in Brussels regularly, it's also...at least here in my position... it's also ~not that you would have a list of people you can just call anytime to ask what do you think about this and that because you hardly ever see those people. So, again, we're in a pretty special situation, when we talk about having direct contacts with the other capitals, but I think by and large of course, also here I mean, in general in the area of security policy... it's still a fact that of course, the EU, Brussels is actually the primary fora for our security policy, only that it is predominantly conducted by our delegations to this PSC.

Q: Ok. On a daily basis, what are your main tasks? I guess you prepare the...

A: Yes, well the PSC is sitting or is meeting normally twice a week in Brussels and of course it's always got the... mostly got a very long agenda. And well, it's not dealing only with security policy; it also deals of course with questions of, you know, current concerns in world politics. But still, a lot of the security policy related to the EU crisis management missions... so I think, I would say about 50%, between 40 and 50% of the agenda points of the PSC concern us; so it's actually us who write the instructions. And so, that takes a lot of our time actually, to actually write the instructions and then of course we have to stay

abreast of the developments in Brussels; you have to read all the documents that the Brussels machine turns out... So, you know, I guess, if we just talk about the PSC – that takes about 30 to 40% of our time, to just know... follow the issues and then actually issue the instructions to our PSC delegations. And then uhh... apart from that, of course we write informations for our political director, for the Secretary General, if they meet other colleagues, so that's again an important part of our work. And here in my unit we also deal with NATO and the Partnership for peace, which is something ok, not of direct concern to the EU. And then of course, maybe 20-30% of our time is also dedicated to other issues like for instance now the Medvedev proposal on the European security... what to do about that, how to work out an Austrian position. And then let's say purely Austrian affair, like our contribution in some, you know, basic security policy documents like the Security and Defense doctrine or right now we're working on a foreign operations' concept. That is not maybe in connection with the EU. So that's a broad overview of what we're doing.

Q: Ok. When you want to defend a specific Austrian position, how do you proceed? I mean, it's a broad question, but, for instance, do you see what the others think before...

A: Yes, I think that's very important, maybe the most important issue, to have an idea of weather there are other member states who roughly share this position or with whom we have common interests on this. Because to stand alone among 27 is a very awkward position and uhh... theoretically, you have the possibility to say no, I don't want this... but I think – and you must be very, how should I say, you must be very “choosy” about where to make such a stand if it's necessary at all. I mean, the patience of partners is limited, so uhh... having a reputation of blocking the process for relatively unimportant things is probably not good for you if you want to, you know, push something... (more important). You can always bloc things but sometimes you need to you now convince the others to follow you and if you have a reputation of a... ~“spoil sport” that would be more difficult. So, yes, I think the most important thing is actually to know who will fight this out with us. And in most cases, I hardly remind of a situation where we – at least in this framework – where we absolutely stood out alone. It was never necessary you know... as long as I can recall in my area of responsibility. Because in most cases you know, there are always others who think a bit like you and then well, it's about achieving a compromise. We hardly ever get 100% of what we want, but in the end, people meet somewhere in the middle. And knowing who is my ally is important. Although, actually, finding out, actually who you can count on, who might share you view, is also I think mostly done on the Brussels' level. Because these people, the PSC meets 2 times a week, its subcommittees... they normally have a pretty good idea of where the other delegations stand and where, who is for what and against what on a certain issue.

Q: Ok. And is it quite variable where your allies stand most of the times?

A: I would say it's very variable... because obviously interests change. I mean there are certain you know... I would say, when it touches a definition of common costs of military operations, which... TINA... not paid out of the EU budget but you know, every MS has to spend money to cover these expenses, we are normally, let's say, very concerned about what can be recognized as common costs and what has to be financed by any nation that actively participates in an operation. So there for instance, we are always in a group with Germany, the UK, the Netherlands I think very often and then, on the other hand, on these issues, you have France, Poland who rather want to have as much as possible finance in common. So normally when there's a financial issue we very often find ourselves on one side with Germany, Ireland to some extent. ... When it concerns let's say operational issues, it can vary greatly actually who is on what side, so that's not really foreseeable really. Coalitions in that sense change so uhh... you always have to look anew how the camps are composed.

Q: O. Now, concerning the COREU, do you use it?

A: Well, actually not specifically in my area. I think again mostly because we have the PSC that meets twice a week so there are no necessity to communicate by the COREUs. I think that sometimes there's one category of COREU – the COPOL – which concerns issues of direct interest to us. But I think in the 4 years I have spent here I have actually actively written 3 COREUs, so it's very little actually. Again it's another story in the other – the more regionally oriented departments because they very often... What we hardly ever do in the security policy field is elaborate common declarations and so on, whereas for instance, on Africa issues, after any election, change of government, major event, the EU comes up with a common declaration and these are very often put together by a COREU; the Presidency sends out a proposal, everybody who wants to change something sends a COREU and then the Presidency makes a second try.... So behind every of these declarations, it's maybe 15 or 20 COREUs, so in that case this communication network is used very often. In our area, not that much again, because of the PSC...

Q: ...

A: we have amazing amounts of documents from Brussels, from the Secretariat...

Q: Concerning neutrality, how does Austria/you conciliate your neutrality with your participation in CFSP and do you feel like it's considered a problem in any ways by the other MS?

A: I wouldn't say it's a problem and I don't think it's a problem – at least at this stage of development of European security policy – for any other member. Firstly, Ireland, Malta, Sweden, Finland are pretty much in our position. I think Malta and Ireland, just as Austria would declare themselves as being neutral countries. Sweden and Finland, they wouldn't call themselves neutral, but “alliance free”... in a sense it's the same position. Uhh... when we joined the EU in 1995 or had the referendum I 1994, the idea was that no, EU membership does not impair Austria's neutrality and so there are no necessity to have any special protocol on how to deal with neutrality. And also the creation of ESDP in 1999 - the Helsinki decision – didn't really change that. Nevertheless, one thing we did when we joined the EU in 1995 was add an extra article to the constitution – which is I think called 23...let me check that actually (go check in the constitution)... which states that Austria is fully participating in all aspects of common foreign and security policy. Uhh... and so, I think the text was maybe a compromise between those who said that's no problem whatsoever in any case and those who were not so sure and wanted something in the constitution to, in a way, make it clear that there is no problem. So, it is, yeah, 23 F. And uhh... the thing is that already with the beginning of the 1990's, I think the crucial event was the first Gulf war actually. Austria started to rethink the concept of neutrality it had been practicing during the Cold war years. The idea was now to say, look, we remain neutral, but in our we exercise, how we live, if you want, neutrality, we limit or concentrate on 3 uhh, let's say major tenets: first of all, there's no participation in wars, as of, you know pursuing your interests by arm force - no participation in war; no participation in military alliances and no permanent stationing of permanent troops on our soil. That is – these 3 elements – are basically composing Austria's neutrality. If you look at ESDP, it's actually uhh... not... it doesn't have the form of a military alliance; because in a sense, it is not so much about defense in the classical sense of the word, but crisis management. So, in a sense, use all your means at your disposal – possibly also military means - to help settled conflicts in other regions of the world. ~by there you're improving your security as well because you avoid, you know, secondary repercussions of these conflicts on your country, on the EU. But the ESDP is not about waging war, or giving any assurances of common defense to any other country in the EU or outside. So because of that neutrality is not a problem for our participation in ESDP. Uhh... maybe at some point in the future it COULD be a problem because the current treaties foresee it – the Treaty of Lisbon, if and when it enters into force, foresees that. At some point in time, you know uhh... EU MS could take decisions that we will actually really establish a joint or common European defense, which will probably not make sense if you don't give a binding security assurance amongst each other. So at one point one would maybe have to rethink the position... but I think that's still a considerable time away. And right now, as it will be under the Lisbon Treaty, there's no problem with neutrality.

Q: But do you know if, before the ESDP was launched, if the Austrian government tried to really avoid that...

A: Well, first of all, I think we were always favorable to develop ESDP in the format in which we have it right now. ... It was actually Austria who was organizing the first informal meeting of EU defense ministers and so, which is at the very beginning of this movement towards the Helsinki decisions. I think... there was a realization... as we had seen in the Balkans, before our entrance in the EU, but afterwards also in Kosovo, that the EU needs to be able to have capacities on the ground, and do something beyond political declarations and embargos and you know, stick and carrots policies. And given that... especially because the Balkans are a priority number one in our security policy... we certainly had an interest at strengthening the EU capacities there and as far as I can tell, I don't think there was ever a point where we would have been concerned that it might go too far... and that it would be risk for our neutral status. Because on the other hand, just as much as the neutral states didn't want to have something like a real European defense right away, you had many NATO states, who were not very keen on, let's say going too far in the field of military and security policy integration, because they still prefer to have NATO as the “insurance” policy number one in that respect. ... people meeting in the middle... So, no I don't think there was ever a point where Austria had to work out to avoid taking a turn where we would have said, no we can't go there.

Q: And concerning NATO, how does it impact your work within CFSP and ESDP, the fact that Austria is not in NATO...? Is it in any way a disadvantage or an advantage...?

A: I don't think it's really a marked disadvantage. I mean, there are many possible arrangements on how NATO can put certain capabilities at the disposal of the EU for military crisis management operations. In such a case, as it is the case with EUFOR in Bosnia, of course as a non-NATO member you have to make sure you have some access also to the NATO side of these things. So if NATO works out at the operational planning for EUFOR-Althea, you need to make sure that you've already observed the planning

process (~). But I think these problems you know have been resolved to our satisfaction and uhh... the current problems that there are with the cooperation between EU and NATO ... but there's definitely no specific European or neutral if you want problem in that area. No, I don't think we have any concern that we might you know...be left out of something in that respect. On the contrary to some extent, our PfP participation is actually very important to make sure we can participate in EU military operations. Because PfP, in a sense, not only, but maybe the most important element of it, is that it enhances or helps improve the inter-operability of our own forces; so make sure that the Austrian troops have similar standards of training and equipment than forces of NATO states have. And this interoperability is important also if you want to undertake EU operations. And there's no such mechanisms in the EU to do that so I think if we wouldn't have PfP, as a framework to prepare our troops for multinational operations, I think we would have problems or we would have to establish a similar mechanism in the EU. So actually there is a very productive or positive link between our PfP membership, and therefore also our relationship with NATO, and our participation in ESDP, as far as military aspects are concerned.

Q: You mentioned the Balkans as an important issue for Austria but apart from that, what are the key issues in CFSP and ESDP for Austria?

A: To start with CFSP, I would say...well ok, regionally, as we said, number one priority is the Balkans – goes beyond CFSP actually... - then also, the middle East is of special importance to us as well. When we come to topics, Austria is always very active in themes like promotion of human rights, democratic values – in the OSCE it's called the human dimension, so this kind of thing. And then on the other hand, disarmament issues, including for instance anti-personal landmines, cluster munitions, this sort of thing. So I think these are issues we put a lot of emphasis on, especially because when we talk about for example nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation especially, we are the host country for the IAEA and the ? , so we know there's a ...? between Austria and these issues...we are an important seat for these international organizations in this field.

Q: And on these issues, how is the convergence/divergence of views; how do you succeed to make your points on these issues...?

A: human rights of course = rather convergent views... When it comes to disarmament, non-proliferation... especially non-proliferation it's pretty much the same thing; everybody in Europe being pretty solid for you know blocking proliferation and doing everything possible... With nuclear disarmament, there are some disagreements with the nuclear weapons states on how to proceed... But in the end, these are just minor issues actually, but of course to really find out where are the most difficult issues you may have to get in touch with the disarmament department who deals with that. But as far as I know, again it's a case where in the EU...when we talk for instance about nuclear disarmament, there is a group of countries – the Irish, Denmark to some extent ... so I don't think that on these issues I mentioned we are alone on our own.

Q: Ok. What is your opinion on the often stated claim that there is no European foreign policy...?

A: Well certainly... there's not a European foreign policy in the sense of course that there's a US or Canadian foreign policy, with one Minister in the end and the Prime minister deciding this is what we do. So... European... CFSP basically is about finding a common denominator among the 27 but I think it is still uhh... astonishing that...in all foreign ministries, especially those of the medium and smaller states, how much all activity, in almost all areas of foreign policy, is channeled by the CFSP. If you look at our foreign policy report (yearbook of Austrian BMEIA)... if you just look at the index actually, the chapters are called ... “the EU and Africa”, “the EU and Asia”.... So in the yearbook, I think 60 to 70% of Austrian foreign policy is like depicted by our CFSP...there is no separated chapter: Austrian policy vis-à-vis the Middle East, EU policy vis-à-vis the Middle East; it's in general assumed to be one thing. So I think it's not just cosmetic, that's really how we work here; whatever we want to achieve and in every field the EU is conducting... we are conducting our policy by the CFSP. ... but as the Irak war has shown, sometimes the 27 can't agree you know. ...? So obviously there's a big difference between the foreign policy of one state and the foreign policy of what is still... a group of... very closely ? group of states. But I think CFSP, if I just judge from my everyday work and everyday reality, is actually an absolute reality. Here in the Ministry I think it's absolutely a predominant or THE predominant framework in which we work.

Q: Ok. So there are not much areas of Austrian foreign policy which are pursued more on the national level?...?

A: Well there are some...for instance issues of closer neighborhood you know. ... So there are some issues we deal with on our own because by their nature they don't lend themselves to the European level...it wouldn't be much use. And then of course there are initiatives we have which are not really on the European level but in a sense elaborated to have an effect on the European level. For instance, we try

to have a very close relationship with our Eastern neighbors, including countries like Poland or Croatia which are not our neighbors in a physical sense. So that is an issue of well, maintaining good neighborly context, but also an issue of getting together a group which can act together in the bigger EU framework. Because there's also a reality – as I mentioned you know these changing coalitions – but it's understood of course to have a close relationship with some states who largely share your outlook on a lot of issues. And in our point of view I think it's actually our Eastern and south-eastern neighbors with whom we have so much in common that we can, you know, in many very cases form useful ad hoc alliances.

Q: Ok. ...

A: I think it's a difficult issue for historical reasons obviously. Our eastern neighbors are still... I wouldn't say worried but... Of, course for historical reasons Austrians want to avoid at all costs to pretend having a leadership role. Especially now that all of them – with the exception of Croatia – have joined the EU. Maybe before they joined in 2004 we still understood ourselves as being you know their best friend in the EU and the state most ? about pushing their entry in the EU. So ...? I think with EU membership it's largely ?... My personal impression is that, especially for Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Poland this Visegrad framework of cooperation is much more important. Simply because they have more in common in terms of historical experiences... then they have with Austria. So I think maybe our cooperation with those states does not go as far as, sometimes does not go as far as we would wish it to go. Especially those 4...? closely amongst themselves. And apart from historical reasons – which count less and less as time goes by – there's the issue that, when they joined the EU, Austria kept limits to the movement of workers... So I think in many cases when we – I hear from my colleagues who deal with this – when we come up with ...? (projects of closer cooperation, etc.), they will say ok, let's start with you lifting the limitations on Polish workers coming to Austria. So, we certainly have no pretensions for leadership, although I think for historical reasons the idea is in everybody's mind you know.

Q: Ok, and talking about your post in Rome... how different is working in a bilateral environment and working in a multilateral environment...?

A: As far as our bilateral embassies in other EU states are concerned, European issues, EU issues do take a lot of their time; there is a very direct connection between especially our EU membership and what our bilateral embassies do in other EU member states. For example...briefings... So.... There is a big impact of EU membership on how these embassies (bilateral in the EU) work.

Q: ok, and for instance, in Rome, were you communicating often with the officials of the other MS...?

A: Yes, because I was speaking with ~them at these briefings. ... you're in a social context where of course you spend 90%of your time with the Italians but then with the embassies of the other EU states. ...

Q: Ok. Coming back to this Ministry, do you feel like there is a certain difference between older colleagues who were there before the EU membership and those like you who came after...? Or... difference between people working on the EU and the others...?

A: Interesting question. I think there are generational issues yes. I work probably in a way which is somewhat different than older colleagues who are more advanced in their career or those who entered the Ministry recently. Although I don't think this has nothing to do directly with EU membership. Because I assume, from what I can tell, that most of my colleagues who were in the Ministry some time before the EU membership were, how should I say, ardent proponents of EU membership. So I don't think the political outlook of anybody in the Ministry has changed a lot with EU membership; they were happy to be EU members. So I think there are just normal generational issues with how far are you accustomed to working with emails and so on. And I thin older colleagues are still used to a more formal way of work: making a draft and showing to your superior and.... But as I said, no I don't think it's connected to the EU membership. An indirect connection might be... very shortly after we joined the EU in 1995... our technological equipment took a big leap forward with our EU membership... especially with the Presidency (1997) actually (everybody getting a personal computer with Internet, etc.)...that was a big change. ...theses changes in a sense were pushed by the EU membership and the EU presidency. That might be the indirect link...

Q: And for the 1997 Presidency, did you get any sort of training...?

A: Not personally because I was very young in the Ministry still. But those people who were to chair working groups got special training on how to chair, in general meetings the procedures... and there was a big program for operating the technical infrastructures in the Ministry...

Q: Mood of diplomats towards EU membership?

A: ... I think the mood was very positive.

Q: Coming to the end... what are the advantages and disadvantages for you of working in this European framework?... on a professional practice level

A: In a sense it's difficult to say because I've never known anything else in a way. But... in international fora like the UN... a lot of time spent in EU coordination meetings and I wonder, especially for small non EU countries (e.g. Switzerland), how you manage to keep abreast of the developments if you don't have contacts with the EU member states... and if you wouldn't feel left out of a lot of things if you don't belong to a regional group...

Q: Ok. But do you feel like your room for maneuver is smaller...?

A: No, I don't think so because I think that actually our room for maneuver is bigger in the EU than it would be outside. Because Austria on its own among ... I don't think the room for maneuver would be any bigger. Because I think that as a member of a group like the EU – relatively homogenous group – I think you have more possibilities to get across the point if you know the others than if you're just on your own you know. You have the chance to getting your specific issues into a EU position and that's a big advantage for you actually. So I think the likelihood of the Austrian position getting heard or of influencing the way things go is bigger, is considerably bigger with us as a member than it would be if we were outside I guess.

Q: Ok, that's all.

A: Although at 27 sometimes, again you know, you have to make compromises; sometimes you have long discussions and you don't come up with a satisfactory statement on this or that part, but that's you know, a matter of give and take; sometimes you get something... which has much more weight if the whole EU is behind it.

Entretien 8

MAE (DG II) 1^{er} juillet 2009

Q : Professional background :

A : Current position since beginning of the year (2009); before was ambassador to Belgrade; before ambassador to Sarajevo; before that, director of the Balkans' department in the MFA; before in New York at the mission to the UN.

Q: So I guess you're specialized on the Balkans' region?

A: Uhh, not really... yes I spent 13 years on the Balkans' business so I kind of have a specialization but we try not to focus too much on only one subject and have at least 3 or 4.

Q: Ok. Do you have frequent communications with colleagues from the other EU MS or do you communicate more with the Austrian diplomats based in Brussels?

A: More with our people in Brussels because I'm kind of the one who sends instructions to our ambassador in the PSC so whatever instructions he gets they are from me. He also gets input from the other geographic departments (of the MFA), etc. etc. but this (department) is the main focal point. So if you want, our main interlocutor the PSC ambassador in Brussels and also our ambassador to NATO in Brussels. Regarding the other EU member states, you know, once a semester we have a security policy directors' meeting. The last time it was in Prague obviously. We do it once a semester. I have the feeling though, it should be more often. I already suggested it to my colleagues there, because I have the feeling that it's a very good thing if we meet from time to time... of course we see each other in conferences, for example the OSCE conference... And from time to time we do have bilateral consultations with MS when we have the feeling it would be nice to talk about security policy for half a day or so. Last month I had my colleague from Hungary here in Vienna; we talked for half a day on these issues.

Q: Do you have closer "friends", informal partners?

A: Obviously yes, because the countries who are in the same position as we are, there is a kind of natural convergence of positions, of views, of ideas. This is countries who have about the same size and the same interests as Austria; I would mention the Swedes, the Finns, the Irish, also for example the Dutch, the Danes – well the Danes it's a little bit complicated sometimes because they have this special arrangement... - but those countries who are of a similar geographic size and a similar, let's say, international commitment – like-minded countries, this sort of things. As regards the new member states, we have a very close cooperation with Hungarians, also with the Czechs, with the Slovenes... but mainly, as I said, with those countries who, number one, have similar geographic size and who are politically like-minded.

Q: Ok. Concerning NATO, is it a disadvantage not to be a member and hence not being like in the center of discussions?

A: Well, I don't know whether it's an advantage, I mean this is a fact. A couple of years ago we had discussions whether or not it would be advisable to join NATO, but the outcome of the discussions was

that the population doesn't want to be a NATO member, so that was the end of the discussions. I guess we don't have any particular problems in this respect. As I said, we are actively participating in the Partnership for Peace, we are cooperating with NATO in some other scenarios, for example Kosovo. We have ... troops under the NATO command and it works very well, although at the beginning some people were thinking, well there might be some problems... but it works perfectly fine, so we don't have any problems. We also have the feeling that NATO is pretty open when it comes to cooperation with non-members, in terms of... for example, we got the permission to participate in the discussions on the new strategic concept. They're not pushing us towards membership, which is very good because otherwise it would be a little complicated but to take as it is our cooperation is really excellent with NATO and very intensive.

Q: Ok. Related to that, regarding neutrality, is it still meaningful... how do you conciliate... where are the limits...?

A: Well, to some extent this is a philosophical question... because it was judge prior to the accession of Austria to the EU that neutrality was reconcilable with membership of the EU, but when it comes to a philosophical debate, of course you can ask the question where are the limits? Some people put it "solidarity inside the EU, neutrality to the outside world". But at the same time, what does neutrality mean? For example, we had a discussion in regard to Serbia and Kosovo: when we saw what the Serbian troops were doing there, and the international community was out to stop them, should we really remain neutral in such a case?... when you see that a state machinery was violating human rights and was obviously committing war crimes. In such a case, can you step back and say, well sorry guys but I can't take any position on that. And there obviously it was quite clear that neutrality as such does not much that you sit and watch others committing crimes and you don't do anything. But what it came down to, neutrality nowadays I would say, after us joining the EU, after joining the EU military operations, after us cooperating with NATO, etc. etc., neutrality nowadays means that you are not member of defense or military alliances, point number one; point number two is that there will not be foreign troops on Austrian soil. Period, that's basically it.

Q: Ok. And do you feel like there are a lot of divergences within the EU on what the ESDP should be like? Well, actually you already said that you cooperate with like-minded countries but how is the cooperation going with states like France and Germany on this topic?

A: Well I wouldn't say there are divergent views; I guess there is a big convergence of views on what the EU should be doing. This is because our colleagues in Brussels are debating those items very intensively and so automatically it follows that you have a convergence of views and you know there is this military headline goal and the civilian headline goal and these papers they are basically sort of supported by everybody. And so the basic orientation and also the structure is basically consensual and maybe one country would like to put more emphasis on this or that aspect but basically I see a large convergence of views. The programs... these papers they are pretty ambitious so we have to work very hard; I think we have all a common interest to make these concepts function, to make them efficient and effective.

Q: Ok. Concerning the instructions you give to your Brussels-based officials... do you feel like there's a group dynamic in Brussels...

A: Well, the instructions, they basically give the big lines. And normally they follow the big lines and if they cannot follow the big lines because the discussions sort of go in a different direction, well they would say, sorry we could not maintain our position, we recommend that we change our position because the mainstream is going in a different direction and we would take this in consideration.

Q: Ok. Now, concerning the COREU, often send info through it?

A: Not as frequently as we used to do it a couple of years ago; I guess everybody is suffering from the important amount of information we get...you get so many emails, reports, papers from this and that institution, think tanks... so I think it becomes automatic that you reduce the number of COREUs a little bit. I mean, when I was the head of the Balkans department between 1995 and 2000, we used the COREU much more often but I have the feeling that the intensity of information is much bigger now than it used to be and it still growing.

Q: And what about the language used in communications...?

A: Honestly, language becomes more and more open than it used to be and I think this is also a factor of the close cooperation inside the EU. When you read a text where it's written "there were frank exchanges of views " that means people were fighting very very hard. Like for example, recently we had the press reports about the Corfu meeting with the foreign minister from Russia and the official communication was that it was a frank exchange of views which means that people were fighting very hard and were not able to agree on anything basically. So this is kind of the diplomatic formula. And it is interesting to see that in some newspapers they did not understand that and a journalist reported, well it

was an interesting discussion because... And some who knew that language understood that, in regular language, the expression meant that they were fighting. But I would say inside the EU it's more open than it used to be before and it's also interesting that, for example, when our Eastern European colleagues joined the EU, I was then in Sarajevo and we had once a week a meeting of the heads of mission from the EU countries to discuss the current situation in Sarajevo. And it was really open and we were saying what we had to say and if we thought that somebody was wrong then we would say, well I don't share your interpretation, I see it differently, etc. etc. So it was very open. And the Eastern European colleagues came and they were totally surprised how open we were, that we would not use diplomatic formulas... that we would not kind of try to "beat around the bush" but to address issues very very directly and it was very difficult for them because it was totally new. Normally the diplomatic language is... you know if you meet a diplomatic colleague you try to be very friendly and you try not to confront him directly and even if you disagree with the position of his country, you would say it in very friendly terms not to spoil the situation etc. But in the EU it was very open and our colleagues from the Eastern European countries they had difficulties because they were simply not used to this openness and frankness.

Q: Ok, interesting. Do you use English all the times...

A: Most of the times. ... Before the East Europeans joined the EU, you had to have at least a passive knowledge of French in order to understand everything. But then, the Eastern Europeans came and most of them didn't have a clue about French. Even the French ambassador had to speak English unless he would not be understood by the East Europeans. So well, it turned out it's English most of the times. But officially it's still English and French.

Q: How was it for you when Austria joined the EU?

A: When we joined I was at that point posted in Tunis. For me it was not so different because earlier I was posted in the UN in New York, so I was already used to this multilateral setting. But for colleagues who had been only on a bilateral scale so far, certainly for them it was something new. And I'm pretty sure that some of my colleagues were in the same position as the Eastern Europeans when they joined, namely to be sort of surprised how open and frank the exchanges of views is among the EU countries. But you know for me it was not so different. I really appreciated it because I had the feeling that, particularly as a small country, you get many more informations (sic) if you can join the ambassadors' meetings or the deputy ambassadors' meetings, like in Tunis we had it once a month amongst the deputy ambassadors in charge of the ? affairs and as we met once a month and certainly you get many many more informations because you know people are talking about what they think, what they have heard...and they have talked to that politician, that Iraqi guy, etc. etc. So from that point of view it is very good, and also to compare notes and to kind of elevate your joint level of information.

... and also... it goes automatically; if country A wants to do A and country B wants to do B and then you sit together all the times and you talk about it, there's a certain convergence of views and a certain harmonization which comes automatically.

Q: Ok. Did you get any kind of training before the entry into the EU?

A: No. Maybe the colleagues here in Vienna they did something, but I don't know.

Q: And during the first Austrian presidency of the EU...where were you at that time?

A: I was here in Vienna, I was director of the Balkans' department and I was also the Austrian member in the COWEB group and when we took the presidency then I was chairman of the COWEB. But you're right, this is an interesting point of view, I mean at that point I had already been for quite some time in the COWEB. I had my UN experience so for me it was sort of natural to take over the chairmanship of the COWEB. But certainly, some colleagues who didn't have this experience it was a little more difficult to kind of cope with this new situation. On the other hand you have the Council secretariat, which helps you a lot. And you need to have a chairman who is not so...sort of well established; they would more or less run the show. And the chairman sits in the chair but the procedural things are normally done by the Council secretariat.

Q: ok. You said that your UN experience helped you... but you said earlier that discussions in the EU are more open...

A: Yes, the UN is still very formal...

Q: How different is it to work in a bilateral setting and working in the EU multilateral context?

A: Bilateral and multilateral are different yes. Although I must say that since we joined the EU, bilateral work has a multilateral angle. Like in Belgrade in particular when we had difficult times when we were discussing the possible independence of Montenegro and in particular the independence of Kosovo, obviously we would sit together rather often and from that point of view there is a multilateral element in that bilateral work as well; due to the fact that we are in the European Union, we are basically intending... well, at least not to have too divergent views on the whole thing. I wouldn't say one harmonized EU view

is not there anyway; see Kosovo for example. But at least to kind of minimize the divergences... I mean when I came to Belgrade – in 2005 – there were still some colleagues from other countries who would simply not participate in an ambassadorial meeting because they would regard this sort of below their dignity or something. But this is kind of the older generation, who evolved in a totally different environment and who regard bilateral as sort of above multilateral work. And so participating in an ambassadorial meeting is just below their dignity basically. And if you need to kind of ask somebody to call him and invite him for dinner or for lunch... it was strange because obviously there was a need to talk to one another in Belgrade – I mean this was a country where we have vested interests as the EU, but it was like that... ? But you still have the feeling that some of the bigger countries – countries who have a permanent seat in the Security Council or countries who are on the G8 or so – they do have a certain, I would say, a more limited appreciation of these coordination meetings than smaller countries, for obvious reasons.

Q: Ok. Touching on that, how are your relations with the bigger countries? Do you feel like they're trying to lead the "boat"?

A: Some people have used the word of the directorate, you know that the big ones are trying to set up a directorate. Humm... You know, for example, the big countries have normally their also natural interests and normally very strong national interests. And so, from that point of view, it follows that, they you know, have a different way of dealing with things. And in particular you see a difference if a small country is president of the EU and if a big country is president of the EU. Of course, the big countries also hold meetings and pass on information, etc. etc. But many colleagues have the feeling that they do have sort of a second agenda aside and they do not involve all the EU members in all the decisions and in all the aspects, in all the items. Whereas if a small country has the presidency, let's say the "service" character of how they're carrying on the presidency is much bigger. Let me give you an example; in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is the steering board, who is kind of leading the peace process and everything, ... is there and there's also the EU presidency representing all the EU member states. Now, if a big country who is sitting on the steering board on its own right and then takes on the presidency... of course it has to inform the other partners of what were the discussions over there. But some people have been complaining that in those cases, the information coming out of there is much more limited than if a small country who comes only in the capacity as EU president. And the willingness to share information and to tell the others what happened, etc. and also the information brought from the outside (what the members not sitting on the board have to say) is much more strong if a small country holds the presidency. I mean... also when we had the presidency in 1998, we were sitting on the steering board in Bosnia and on the Contact group, etc. and we ? saw our role not as Austrians to say what we think, but rather to have the role of a transmission mechanism in a certain way to inform the partners what had happened there, but also to take and collect some ideas and views from partners not represented in those forums to kind of filter them in if possible.

Q: Ok, Concerning the Balkans – very important region for Austria, correct me if I'm wrong – how do you promote your views about this region in the EU context? I mean, depending the extent to which views are diverging on the issues at stake...

A: Well, I would say that the biggest point of divergence is certainly how to deal with Kosovo; it's a really a ? that 5 out of 27 EU countries have not recognized Kosovo and some have been using the terms that the EU policy in this respect is a ?, and I could not disagree to put it like that. So, it boils down to difficulties and problems in the daily execution of the EU work. I know that sort of the official language is, well we have organized things in such a way that everybody can live with all the decisions and all these operations ? ... but in reality it causes an enormous number of problems on the ground in daily work and ...? So this is the biggest point of divergence (Kosovo). We are regretting that very much... on the one hand, they're voting to establish a mission and for carrying it out, and at the same time, they're doing everything you know to make life difficult and to possibly lead to a failure of this mission, so it's a very strange situation. But other than that, I would say that we have a large convergence of views... on the big lines. Divergences are about details, although details can be significant sometimes... (gave example of the ? agreement between Serbians and...).

Q: Ok. To conclude, what would you say are the differences between the diplomatic practice before and after the EU accession of Austria? We already talked about... but for Austria in particular?

A: It's interesting, we had a discussion a couple of years back about our impact on the Balkans before and after joining the EU. And some people were saying, before we joined the EU, we could carry out a much more Austrian foreign policy towards the Balkans and we could promote much more the Austrian point of view and the Austrian way of seeing things, etc. etc. And we have kind of lost this possibility to a certain extent because we have to act within the main stream of the European Union. This is true to a certain

extent, but at the same time, others are saying yes, this might be true, but if you are all alone, like if Austria, not being a member of the EU, suggests something, people might hear it, people might not hear it, and if they don't take out the ideas, who cares. Whereas if you are inside the EU and you kind of manage to make the European Union think like you are thinking, then you have much more impact because then the powerful, or at least the important EU is doing something and this can't be disregarded by the other players. So, it's a certain "give and take"; you certainly give away a certain number of independence, but at the same time you gain efficiency, effectiveness, importance in this respect. I guess we have been managing to sort of to act in such of way that the EU has not always been to the favor of Austria. But nevertheless, we have the feeling that, if you compare it to the beginning, maybe the Austrian point of view has got more ? inside the EU... I mean, I wouldn't like to use this – please don't quote me, but just to give you an idea – we have the feeling that the European policy in the Balkans was Austrianized to a certain extent. I mean... we were on the Security Council back in 1991-1992, and I was one of the delegates on the Security Council and at the beginning it was extremely difficult for us to make our points understood – people thought they (Austrians) have vested interests...it's suspicious form the beginning...Austria wants to undo the results of WWI... those were statements which we could hear. So it was very difficult and the Yugoslavs were saying... and some African countries had sympathy for them...this is how you maintain the unity of your country, etc. And we were saying "but there are human rights violations, etc. etc. and the they said... either they said so what, because it's an internal problem, and then the UN has no competence to deal with that, and then we'd say it could spread to other countries, etc. ... I mean this was basically the talks and it was very difficult for us, it took us a couple of months, if not years, to convince the others - not only us but like-minded countries – that it was necessary for the UN to act... In the end I have the feeling that our point of view was at the end the common point of view.

Entretien 9

MAE (DG III) 1^{er} juillet 2009

Q : What are the main tasks of this DG...

A: This DG corresponds to the first pillar of the EU (internal market, etc.); the 2 other pillars of the EU corresponds in this Ministry to the Political section (DG II) and DG IV. In this DG, we also look beyond the EU; bilateral economic relations, multilateral organisations active in economic affairs: WTO, IMF, the World Bank, etc. etc.

Q: Do you have frequent communications with your EU MS counterparts? (yes) How often do you communicate with them?

A: Yes, you see, the thing is here we work according to a calendar which isn't really ours, but which is the working calendar of each Council presidency and by the Commission, so in that sense we are not really autonomous. We always live and work by someone else's calendar. And the frequency of my contacts with my peers in other foreign ministries very much depends on this calendar, whether major decisions are coming up and on some issues of course we take informal contacts, we call each other, we exchange emails...to find out whee everybody stands and sometimes we are asking mutually « could you support us here, could you support us there » and vice versa.

Q: Do you have closer partners in the EU?

A: Yes, there are some I have more frequent contacts with than others. This being for professional reasons; I know certain countries have a tendency to agree with Austria on certain issues... sometimes because of geography.... sometimes because we had a history of good relations in the past, I know I can trust them and that's why I ring them up.

Q: So there are a number of people that you know better in the EU?

A: Yes. And we do have one meeting of the MS' EU sections directors per presidency so we meet twice a year, that's usually at the beginning of each presidency. And most of us attend the meetings of the General Affairs and External Relations Council – the monthly meetings of the foreign ministers - ... most of us accompany their minister to these monthly council meetings and the of course we see each other and we have moments to speak a few words with each other.

... in a few days we'll be having a meeting with the Swedish presidency which just took the presidency and there we don't negotiate anything; this meeting is an informal meeting convened by the Presidency in term which serves – of course we have an agenda proposed by the presidency – to present their agenda, so we have an exchange of views; what do they think should they be achieving in the next 6 months and all MS we have the possibility to comment on that. For example, let's say the Swedes would say ... we could suggest to add this or that item to the agenda, or to have more meetings for enlargement with this or that

candidate country, etc. ... But at the end, we don't have a communiqué... it has to be agreed by everybody.

Q: Language used in meetings?

A: English and French; yes French is still used.

... Every big multilateral machinery has its own vocabulary. And everybody who wants to work with this machine, play with this machine, get something out of this machine better learn the vocabulary first. There are certain watchwords; everybody knows if this sentence is being said in such and such way, it means something very precise that...? So yes of course, it's maybe not very communicative towards the external world, etc. but those big organizations tend to develop their own working expressions.

Q: Strategy to defend Austria's position in the EU...

A: Look, this depends very much. It's different maybe for every single issue and it's different according to... do we formally negotiate something, will there be a written document at the end or do we take a vote, or do we just have an informal exchange of views and it appears important for Austria that such and such point of view be conveyed to the other participants. So it depends very much on those circumstances. Now, the ideal method of working is: that you are assured of a certain outcome, that this outcome covers your interest and that you need not even negotiate about it with anybody; either your point of view is already known to everybody – everybody knows Austria will never agree to such and such document unless it contains a certain reference, a certain wording, etc. So, or you communicate informally with the Commission or the Presidency and say, look, next week's meeting, this and that will be coming up; in the first draft, why can't you include such and such language; if you include that, it'll go through smoothly, if it's not included, I'll have to ask for the microphone and make an intervention and ask that such reference be included. But your meeting will go much easier if you include it from the very beginning and I don't even see a necessity to ask for the floor; maybe I'll only ask for the microphone and expressly thank the Presidency for including this and this reference. But of course, someone might precisely not like what we need and tell the same story to the Presidency and say I'll never agree if... so, then we have a conflict situation. Then we have different methods of going about it... maybe some alliance building, maybe some quid pro quo: we say, ok you leave our language here intact, we leave your language there intact. Often when it comes down to budgetary matters there's the possibility to...? But the method of work, the parameter is "work as smoothly as possible, don't go in the big declarations that steers up everyone and that only steers up controversy, where others feel compel to contradict, etc. Just get your points smoothly without making any waves".

Q: Is this particular to the EU or does it also characterize the way things go in the UN?

A: Well, you see, there're 2 kinds of work in international organizations: one is clearly results' oriented and what I said before is very much results oriented; you want a final document, a communiqué, a declaration and you need 3 lines where it'd say something which expresses very precisely your country's point of view. The other thing is, if the whole thing takes place let's say at the political level, that you have the minister there or the state secretary and he or she makes use of a meeting to bring a point across and generate some media attention, some media feedback, etc. Under these circumstances, it is very often important to say some things publicly even if it's in a meeting not in public but behind closed doors because afterwards you can go to the press and say, look, I've said this and this and this, which is the message you want to bring across to the media. So much of the work, of course not just at the EU but just as well in the UN, is de facto, a media oriented work.

Q: Ok, and overall, your work within the EU, do you experience it as very different than the posts you had either at the UN or in bilateral missions?

A: Well, I've had several diplomatic postings abroad which were of a bilateral nature, and I've work in our UN department for a number of years, so I know multilateral as well as bilateral work. Yes of course there are significant differences. In bilateral relations, you have very often very precise goals and you need to convince your partner that it is in interest of both to achieve those goals and to agree on the timing. But it depends on the consensus among the two parties. Whereas multilateral diplomacy, you are many more players... so you're much more often driven by the calendar of the organization per se, which is spelled out by the Presidency in term, or the Secretary general of the UN, the Security Council, etc.

Q: And in your bilateral postings, did you tend to consult often the other EU MS?

A: Yes, we do have around the world, a system, where in every capital, the resident EU ambassadors and visiting non-resident EU ambassadors meet regularly and consult on issues of common concern. ...? In those meetings of course we concentrate very much on issues which have to do with the EU, issues of foreign and security policy, of relations between the EU as a whole and the host country, and also many times about commercial issues; difficulties in transport, qualifications, market access of products, etc. And also outside the EU, almost in every capital, we develop a modest but visible cultural program of the EU.

For example, in Mexico, film festival... 2 weeks of European films... we choose when we want to appear as a group...

Q: And when you were in bilateral embassies, how important was the CFSP framework...? To what extent did you have your autonomous bilateral policy?

A: My answer might very well differ from the answer given by someone say, in Paris, London or Berlin simply because those countries all in all have more possibilities to conduct an ambitious foreign policy also at the bilateral level. Now, for us, ever since we joined the EU, we have given many competences to Brussels, just like everyone else in the commercial field, but CFSP... take the example of human rights. If we have an issue of concern to Austria, we can do 2 things: we send the Austrian ambassador to, for instance the Mexican foreign ministry, to voice our concern, or we take the monthly meeting of human rights counselors in Brussels and there we (tell or send a little memo to everybody) the others this is of concern to us, is there anybody else informed about it, does anyone share this concern, etc. and if there's an agreement – which is many cases is yes, it's given – then we have the possibility to articulate this concern as a common concern of the 27.

Q: Are there some MS more active at this level?

... There are new MS who are fairly active and old MS who take in general a more observing attitude; it depends very much on traditions and interests of the country. ... So when it comes to third countries, the 27 don't have a necessarily at the outset a uniform topical approach, but in general we're always able to agree on a set of priorities that, say, no one objects to. Maybe it's not supported by everybody with the same enthusiasm but it is a common denominator.

Q: Ok. On another subject, your relationships with the Commission officials...

A: Well, of course, there are quite frequent contacts. When I'm in Brussels I'm visiting colleagues at the Commission, etc. and otherwise I pick up the phone and give them a call or write them an email. That's a very natural thing to do; the Commission is there, has certain competences especially in the economic and commercial field and when we feel someone needs to be addressed, we have the possibility to articulate this vis-à-vis the Commission. But the routine method really would be to go through our permanent mission in Brussels. So whenever... You know, if I just pick up the phone and want a little piece of information and I know the person working precisely on this issue, I can call him and ask my question, for example: how do you assess the status of negotiations, etc. But if we want to bring forward the Austrian point of view... introduce something formally in an opinion building process with the Commission; we will do so through our permanent mission in Brussels.

Q: Ok. Now I would like to talk about the accession period...

A: To be precise, when we joined the EU, I was number two at our embassy in Madrid; during the period of entry negotiations with the EU, we conducted a number of bilateral consultations with Spain, since we needed to convince Spain just like all the EU member states of the advantages of our accession. Working methods: when I came back from Vienna – it was in 1996 – working methods had changed dramatically since as of January 1st 1995 we participate in everything the EU is doing, meaning that the whole new field of professional activities opened up, taking part in opinion building processes among the then 15, substituted traditional bilateral work that had been carried out before. Take the example of human rights, we now very often, when we have an issue, we address this among the EU-27 and not directly on a bilateral basis. This is true of course for this DG of the ministry; there are others that are far less affected; take the section of culture or take Consular protection of Austrians abroad, citizenship, passports, etc. ... some of these issues are now community issues but there we continued working without feeling too many changes. Whereas economic relations, etc., there we have the function of the Commission which hadn't been there before. And of course what is new for us, to work at all levels in the Council of the EU, representing Austria and participating in the work, which in most cases consist of coming to a common position with all the other MS.

Q: Do you see differences with officials from the sections of this ministry (i.e. Cultural policy) who are not much involved in EU matters?

A: Actually no. As a ministry, we function according to the principle of rotation and on average everyone of us change jobs every 4 or 5 years, so if you work on EU issues now, you might afterwards work on bilateral issues, cultural affairs, etc. and vice versa. So we don't have a strict separation here and also psychologically, we all feel very strongly that we are part of the EU, that we would like to work with and within the EU and even if somewhere in the Ministry people work on bilateral affairs, they still know that they are in a ministry also for European affairs.

Q: Ok. And do you communicate/interact a lot with the other ministries of the government concerning EU issues?

A: Yes, we do. One of the most important tasks of the DG is that we are the EU coordination unit for the Austrian government. That means that at the weekly meetings of the permanent representatives in Brussels, there's one desk, one unit in the Austrian gvt that is empowered to give instructions what the Austrian permanent representative will be saying or not saying, where he will be agreeing, where he will be dissenting at formal meetings in Brussels. And this unit is here with us. This unit we cover all issues in the first pillar that affect environment, finance, justice, transport, etc. etc. So at a certain working level in Brussels, all instructions that go out have to cross our desk here because they have to be coordinated. Many issues, which for example affect agriculture and labor department likewise; now if the two disagree, it can be that the labor department gives the instruction we vote against and the other department says we are in favor. So, someone has to look that we always have a coherent, coordinated position. And that is one of our most important tasks. And that's why, necessarily, we are in contact with all the other ministries. Every week there's a meeting of the Brussels' ambassadors where they take formal decisions. In preparation of this meeting, every week we have a meeting here once the agenda is out. Every ministry sees does it have something on the agenda, then we have a coordination meeting here in which all the ministries take part.

... There was a famous Dutch foreign minister and former secretary general of NATO – Joseph Luns- who wants said: “It's wonderful to be foreign minister, if you only wouldn't have the second front at home”. And this of course is something that has changed our ministry profoundly with becoming an EU member. Because now with this coordinating role, of course we are much more closely connected to all other ministries and also institutions like the Trade union congress, the chambers of commerce, etc. who of course as legitimate lobbies make their points of view known and see that these views are respected as far as possible. So we have definitely a strong domestic task.

Q: Jörg Haider episode in 2000...

A: I was heading the EU coordination unit here. Now, just to put the records straight: there never were EU sanctions; there never was a formal decision by the EU to impose sanctions on Austria with the formation of an Austrian government. There was a decision taken by 14 EU MS of dealing in a certain way with the 15th MS, but this, and let me underline this, was never an EU decision, because it is not possible to take such an EU position. Would this had been voted, Austria would have objected. So there was nothing such as EU sanctions, it was measures taken by the other MS, not an EU position. Now, we had of course 2 focal points: how to deal with the other MS under the circumstances and the other was to deal with the issue domestically; how do we explain to the Austrian public whether this is justified, what the Austrian gvt can do and is doing against it. And of course it was for us extremely difficult to be shunt, to have a reduced level of contacts, of no visits at ministerial level, etc. Today, even with a certain distance by the number of years that have passed, still I would say the decision per se definitely was not justified, it was a big error, it backfired, it turned the prevailing mood in Austria v-à-v the EU into a very critical mood and we are laboring to this day with the consequences of this episode. Eventually – I mean, of course we used all avenues and allies opened to us, of dialogue, of contacts with other MS, to talk about the situation and how to resolve the situation in a way that will be face saving for everybody. Eventually it was possible to solve it; we agreed that a group of 3, so called “wisemen” would be charged of observing the situation in Austria under the angle of respect for democratic principles and citizens' freedom, draw up a report and present it to the other MS ... (recall conclusions of the report)... and so when this report was drawn up, these sanctions were lifted by the 14 MS concerned. Now, of course, it was difficult for us, especially in the first weeks of those sanctions, because the media attention was focused on Austria; how would Austria deal with this; how would an Austrian minister would sit down at a Council meeting; how would she or he ask for the floor; would the floor be given to him or her; would there be reactions by the other MS or would there be just icy silence, etc. etc. Yes we handled it, we were able of handling it, we took up quickly normal pattern of work with the other MS; we never broke off participating in every EU meeting; we attended all the meetings just like we would have attended them without those measures. And we always conveyed a message of normality; that this is a gvt that has a majority in Parliament, that elections were conducted in an absolutely free manner.... And so I think the key to the solution very well was to continue working with the EU; of course there would have been maybe other possibilities – of not taking part in meetings, of leaving an empty chair with the EU unable to take any decision at all or maybe we would have blocked EU decision making in the EU altogether. We did nothing drastic but we continued to work as normally as possible. And we felt this paid off.

Q: COREPER....

A: ... Coreper is something very necessary...it's a platform where the 27 and the Commission meet with a set of mind to establish consensus, to identify individual red lines, etc. and it takes an enormous amount of professionalism to take part in Coreper, and at every presidency to preside Coreper, to hammer out

possible solutions, often difficult political compromises, etc. Those are absolute top top professionals of the EU MS who are at work there; all in all they're making an excellent job, making decisions possible... when you look where the individual positions were at the start of the debate, etc. you often see how much Coreper contributed to identify a possible point of consensus.

Q: Last question: is it a job, representative in Coreper, that you would like eventually?

A: My feeling in all honesty is this. This is maybe the most important position for an Austrian diplomat abroad anywhere in the world and of course many colleagues might imagine that they have the qualifications required for the jobs, but it's not a job you ask for; you're called by the gvt.... Regarding myself personally, no I don't have the intention of going to Brussels as permanent representative, since the gvt designated me to go to Madrid as ambassador to Spain at the end of this year and I'm very happy about it (laughs). Not that I would be unhappy in Brussels but... the way things are I'm very happy to go to Spain.

Entretien 10

MAE (DG III) 2 juillet 2009

Q: What are you're main responsibilities here in this current position?

A: In this current position it's purely EU coordination work. So, I don't know whether you studied the Austrian law that determines which ministry does what; you might have a look at that because it says that European affairs are with the foreign ministry – which had been renamed in ~2006 I think “European and International Affairs”. So the “European” has sort of been specifically spelled out in order to make clear that we're not just an external relations' ministry; we are responsible for the European affairs. So the general responsibility for European affairs is with the foreign ministry; there are however exceptions; the Prime minister's office quite clearly also has, you know, some European responsibilities as does every other ministry that sort of has to go, has to take care of certain interests within the EU; the EU being broad in its spectrum, every line ministry has some European affairs to cover. But the general coordination is with us. Which means that, the weekly coordination of the instructions going to the Permanent Representative in Brussels or his deputy are handled within the foreign ministry. We run a weekly coordination meeting where all the other ministries concerned come and we get sort of input and we formalize and formulate the instructions for either the ambassador or its deputy in Brussels. My desk handles the instructions for the ambassador... so Coreper II. Secondly, we prepare General Affairs and Foreign Relations' Council (GAERC); so the monthly responsibility for the foreign ministers meeting in Brussels. And together with the Prime minister's office, my desk is in charge of preparing European Councils four times a year. So that is the coordination “ballot”...

Q: ok. And how is the coordination with the other ministries? Is it difficult to coordinate?

A: Uhh, I mean, I think coordination is always difficult because you will always have “things” where interests diverge. And I think every country within the EU sees that. It depends a little on bureaucratic and administrative institutions as well and it depends a little on the Constitution of the country. Austria has – how should I say, unfortunately for EU membership – a tradition where each minister is responsible for his portfolio ONLY. So there's no collective governmental responsibility under the Constitution, which is an old Constitution (1920), so it's really an old system; the idea is that it's fairly hierarchical and that the Minister is responsible before either Parliament or the Constitutional Court, for how he runs his ministry. For horizontal coordination, that doesn't make it very easy, because for example, the Minister of Agriculture is responsible to do the most for Austrian agriculture, his portfolio foresees that; the Minister of Finance, who is responsible for Austria's role as a net contributor to the EU... to simplify that, his position has to be we actually pay as little as possible because we're a net contributor. The Agriculture Minister – where Austria is doing fairly well when it comes to sustainable... so we get quite a bit of money back from Brussels, so his interest is to get as much as possible for Austria whereas the Finance minister wants to pay as little as possible. So, obviously, whenever it comes to that area or when it comes to expenditures, the lines ministries and the finance ministry, we have sort of diverging interests and we are trying to get a compromise going. So, it's... how should I say, a lot of things work fine now because we've been a member since 1995; I would say that 90% of the time, it's sort of, it works without too many hassles, but there are problems in “friction areas”... and then the foreign minister or the Prime minister cannot intervene in the sense that he doesn't have the right to have the final say or the last decision; for example the French President would be able to cut across and decide in favor of that or that position, but the Austrian Chancellor doesn't have that right, neither does the Foreign/European minister. So we to find a compromise, that's basically what we have to do, but it makes coordination more important, difficult,

but on the other hand it means we will come out with a consensus language in the end. Sometimes it takes a bit long and it makes deal making in Brussels a little difficult.

Q: Do you feel some kind of friction on the part of the other ministries concerning the fact that you (foreign ministry) have to coordinate everyone...?

A: Uh, no because I really think that by now it's well established that we are trying to be as fair as possible and we see our role as...just make sure that we get a position going, you know that we seek the overall interest. I think we're also trying very hard not to lean towards one or the other position or, for example, I mean... the foreign ministry is also responsible for development coordination. Their interest (DG devpt coop) would be to spend as much money as possible on development cooperation, which again sort of, might not be the same position as that of the finance minister... and we're trying, as EU desk, not to lean towards our own ministry's position; either we say, you work it out with them or we sit together to figure it out, but you cannot just give us a position that's the foreign ministry's position without taking into account the finance ministry's interest. So we do try very hard to be bias or not to take sides, just figure out how to find a compromise. So I think that has been acknowledged and recognized, otherwise, the EU coordination role would have gone away from the foreign ministry, because I mean... it can be changed by law... this is a competence that could go away. So if we didn't do it well enough, I think it would have gone by now.

Q: Ok. And compared to your previous positions, do you feel that this is a very different job, because...?

A: You're right that it's like multilateral diplomacy in internal matters; I would think it's the same; you have to find compromises on certain positions. In the end you can only work on a consensus basis because otherwise there won't be an Austrian position. If line ministries cannot agree, then we don't have a position, then our Permanent Representative can only intervene on certain issues. Because I mean we can't choose; if there's no coherent Austrian position, then Austria would have to remain silent, which would very often be to our disadvantage. So far it hasn't happened but that would be sort of the bottom line. And similarly, you know, work at the UN works similarly; you have to find a compromise, otherwise there's no takes or decision at the end, so it's fairly comparable. Compared to bilateral diplomacy of course it has nothing to do with each other; in bilateral diplomacy you're more a lobbyist for your country's interests.

Q: Ok. I was wondering also, do you meet or communicate frequently with people from the other Ms in this current position?

A: In this current position no, because is position is more internal vis-à-vis Austrian ministries and external vis-à-vis our permanent mission in Brussels. But it doesn't have a network of other people in other ministries doing something similar; you get different networks – like the European correspondents... who know each other and can call each other -; we don't have that for EU coordinators. Since every country organizes itself slightly differently... so we don't really have a network of "EU coordinators". I do meet people though because I go to the GAERC; so I go to Brussels once a month. So I would meet people like... known but from different jobs. The other thing is, because we are also the desk in charge of preparing the next presidency, normally I go to ~meeting of presidency before they take over, so there you meet people, so in that sense there's a little element of connections within the EU but it's small.

Q: And when you want to put forward an Austrian position, what is the procedure, I mean, would you for instance consult the other MS?

A: It really depends on the subject matter. But very often that wouldn't be my desk's responsibility, that would be who handles that particular issue. So if you have... a recent example: Austria was interested in getting basically just one sentence into the conclusions of the last European Council. And it's a sentence where the European Council invites the European Commission to draw a strategy for the Danube region. It's an idea that Romania and Austria were sort of you know...it was an idea born a about ~ a year and a half ago ; we told we needed something more coherent for that area, because there's bits and pieces and loads of various EU and bilateral activities in the Danube area but nothing really looks at the whole thing strategically, looks at the region as something that should be developed sort of strategically. So we wanted that sentence in. And it took us about I would say half a year to feed it into the conclusions. And there what happens is your strategy is, you know... sort of multilayered; you do not just do it in Brussels; it's one area where you work heavily and regularly, but you would also, as you said, use contacts with, first of all, other Danube states within the EU, to get their support – whenever there was contact with Hungary, the Slovenians and so on, we would talk to them and get their support – and then of course we get to convince the Czech presidency of the EU, so we would use bilateral embassies, direct contacts between the minister and his colleagues or on a senior officials' level, and of course our permanent representative in Brussels would also work on this. So, how should I say, it's something where you use everything, but the coordination in Vienna was done by the desk in Vienna that's responsible for enlargement issues and our desk for Central, Eastern and south-eastern Europe, so they would handle that.

Q: Ok. Concerning bilateral embassies, to what extent would you say that there's EU work throughout the world in your EU embassies?

A: it really depends, I mean... I was consul general in Chicago and so EU work was more limited in its portfolio, but Even there I would go out, when I went to universities to talk about Austria, ? you don't talk about Austria anymore, you talk about the EU with an Austrian angle. So I would go and give like ? ... I mean I was there when the Euro was introduced ... with the Austrian particularities; EU enlargement: I would explain why that was of interest to Austria, but I would talk about enlargement as such. So you cannot fully distinguish your national and the EU position anymore; we are ? something that's supranational, so obviously you know, whether the EU is already a federal state or not is ~ a debate in theory, but it definitely is something that sort of adds or..., to some degree it adds to our portfolio and on the other hand it also takes away some of our national portfolios because it's a joint responsibility and not a national responsibility anymore. This becomes even more pronounced I would say in third countries where there's a very strong EU involvement in political or you know, human rights issues, or if there's a crisis situation and the EU intervenes; so in a place like Bosnia or Serbia, you cannot distinguish national from EU positions. And each ambassador would have to carry the EU position forward becomes it is the framework within which we operate. So that would go for third countries. When you're ambassador in an EU country like I was in Malta, nearly everything you do is EU-related because when we opened our embassy in Malta after we joined the EU, specifically with the interest of finding as many...you know, I wouldn't say similarities but finding common grounds, trying to figure out how the Maltese would act or both or you know, give the background to their positions and at the same time lobby for Austria's interests and get Maltese support where we could. However, how far that can go between 2 countries that are ..? but... that's ~ the job in an EU country, even though you have some bilateral issues of economic exchange and cultural exchange, etc. but overall the EU angle takes the strongest... you know, is stronger than anything else. So I don't think you can distinguish the two anymore.

Q: okay. And from your experience, are there countries with which Austria tends to have closer relationships?

A: ... The further away you get from the EU, I suppose the more coherent the EU position becomes somehow... if you're in South Africa or in Nigeria, there are weekly (or bi-weekly I'm not sure) meetings of the heads of mission of the EU. And you also realize very often that you then, you know, that you have a fairly coherent approach to things... there are nuances, you know, you always get the former colonial powers which of course have a special interest, etc. but all in all you behave like a European country behaves...I think this is fairly obvious. Within the EU, the alliances shift; you cannot really say that there's one country that you're closest to; I mean we do have, on agricultural matters for example we're probably closer to the French or Irish position because we have ... but it's quite outspoken... we do have an interest on that. When it comes to environmental standards, we're probably in there with the Nordic countries that have higher sort of ~interest. When it comes to our anti-nuclear standards – because Austria is strong on that – Ireland has a similar position. So, within the EU or in certain matters, you would really choose your allies. There is, of course, a certain affinity with Germany because, you know... not so much because of the language but I think because legal and political traditions are similar. So, on a lot of issues we would very often go with Germany. Also on justice and home affairs, we seem to have a similar approach to migrants; of course because we're subject to the same migrant foreign pressures and the same issues of how the composition of the population is changing with immigration from Turkey and South-Eastern Europe; so there are similarities so we vote similarly in the EU. Otherwise, in multilateral fora, I think uhh... in the UN, according to subjects again, but very often we would be rather close to Canada for example on human security issues, small arms, human rights issues, etc. on peace keeping, etc. So it would depend on the subject but there are also affinities that are more long-term.

Q: Coming back to a previous question, how successful would you say Austria is in defending its interests within the EU?

A: (mouth sound of not knowing...) It really is a difficult question to answer. Because it varies very much. We are, by EU standards we're a medium size member, but we're in the group of small if you so wish. Uhh... it's probably harder for us to impose ourselves than for larger countries, there's no question about that. Uhh, in... we choose our issues I would say. What you can do in the EU is you can be destructive very easily; you can just say no to certain things; to actually pro-actively influencing how decisions are being made and sort of have a positive impact is much more difficult. To put it bluntly. Because especially on issues where you need unanimity, if you say no. However you don't do that very often as a smaller country; again you sort of choose where you say this is my bottom line and I can't go beyond that. On nuclear issues for example, where we have a very strong, very outspoken position against nuclear... the peaceful use of nuclear energy, they know that they can't go in a certain direction in consensus language

... we have to find compromises and that we can't promote nuclear energy as the energy of the future, that the EU cannot say that because at least one member, Austria, will never agree to that. So, there are certain issues where there are national, kind of red lines that they can't cross. But in general, I think Austria tries to remain in the mainstream. And very very often we are actually in a position, I mean we're not in an extreme position. There are other countries that take more extreme stances. We very rarely do, simply because it's not in our national interest. Internationally, we're actually very well represented and we're doing well in multilateral fora, in the UN, in the OSCE... I think there, our long tradition as a neutral country always helped because it gave us the basis of trust with the non-aligned countries and so I think we're doing well there when it comes to try to get our interests sort of represented. Otherwise it depends a bit on which subjects, with whom....

Q: Ok. So neutrality still has an impact, as you were saying in the UN... (A confirms: yes). But in the EU I guess...

A: In the EU it's less of an issue. I mean when it comes to security issues... it becomes an issue when we're talking treaty language. For example at the last European Council when we were talking about these legal guaranties for Ireland, which actually take into account Ireland's tradition of neutrality, we were rather insisting that the language would have to be general so that it would also cover us. So that there's no... that by spelling out exceptions for Ireland, other neutral countries, meaning ourselves, will not be excluded there; so that there wouldn't be any contrary kind of conclusion. So we are careful when it comes to treaty language. You're right of course that within the EU as such, you can't fully speak about neutrality because it's... we join in EU operations, we you know... (hesitation) We haven't had a problem case yet, the EU has not yet, as of yet, ever gone into a kind of peace-making, peace-keeping Petersberg operation without the UN mandate. So it has never been an issue because once there's a UN security council mandate, neutral or not you can participate...you know, it has the stamp of approval of the international community so it's not an issue. Theoretically you could have a case where the EU goes in an operation without the UN mandate and then maybe there will be a neutrality sort of issue. Under the Austrian Constitution we could still participate, it's doable, but it would raise certain questions regarding our neutrality. But that's sort of.... Somehow it's an academic issue, it has never happened so far.

Q: Ok. Concerning the period of accession to the EU for Austria, I would like to know how it was for you to adapt to the new circumstances...

A: It is a big change and it was a big change, there's no doubt about it. I mean... I joined in 1988, so that was before the fall of the... for us, in a way, the whole game has changed completely. (~30min) I don't think you can compare diplomacy of 2009 to diplomacy in 1988-89; it's just, the world has changed. So I think there's a change for everybody but for us in particular; we were a small neutral country between two blocs, which disappeared. We were always outside the EU and then we joined, so we became members of the club. Which was first a much smaller club and now is a very very large club and so the sort of rules of the game have changed and the sort of functioning. It's more difficult at 27, there's no doubt. In the very beginning, what the EU required for us, how should I say... as a neutral country between 2 blocs, you would normally, in the Cold war, Austria would first have to wait what the 2 blocs would define as their position and then you would try to find the middle ground, somehow your space. So you would... very rarely would we be in a position where we would find our own interest, it would be more sort of we would have to look at what would be the opposing interests of those two blocs and then you would try to find a niche for yourself. So it was more a reactive position. In the EU, you're then for the first time in a position where you have to define your interest very early on, very often before the Commission makes a proposal or... so in that sense it pushed us towards a more active role, and that took a few years, to put it bluntly. Because to change the whole way you operate: you know, reactive to pro-active, there's a change... it took quite a while to get used to that. And to some degree, it was even difficult to define our position and our interests because we were so not used to doing that! You know, clearly sitting down and defining in the next year or so we will have this concern or this interest. But over the years, it just sort of happened... you adapt to that; you speed up your process, you speed up your...you know. It's still something that's difficult because for small administrations like ours, and that covers every ministry, we are a small administration, compared to the Germans, the British or the French. It is more difficult to see where the Commission might come up with something problematic and you have to ? very early on. So, it puts quite a lot of a strain on our resources, no question.

Q: Ok. How were you prepared – if prepared in any way – to the entry in the EU? Like did you have sort of training sessions?

A: Uhh... I think the answer is no. It just happened. But, I think what happens is you grow into it and kind of the crash cores really was the first EU presidency in 1998. Because then you have to, you do get briefings and you get...because the Council secretariat gives you training. So somehow there was a kind

of training through the preparation for the presidency. It wasn't to teach us specifically how the EU works but it was sort of; we needed to prepare for the presidency; normally you start that process at least 2 years in advance, which brought us at the beginning of our membership, so in that sense, we were... there was a kind of crash course for the whole Austrian administration.... I was on the foreign policy side... at the moment we joined I was in our embassy in Ireland and in a way that was my training as well.... I was in an embassy which was an EU embassy; the Irish would treat us differently obviously; the moment you join you're a partner so there's more transparency and you can ask any question. I have to say they were really very good, they were very patient with our questions; they would accept that we were new comers and we needed to... so it was actually a very positive experience that other MS would also be generous enough – smaller Ms maybe more than larger ones – to explain things...

Q: Ok. And would there be people from the other MS coming into the foreign ministry to help out...

A: Before the presidency yes, we would invite people, but for membership as such, less so. For the presidency... (details given ~35min). You could see that we had advanced significantly by the time of the second presidency; when 2006 came around we were much more, you know, into the game than we were in 1996 when we prepared for 1998. 1998 really was a presidency where we thought, we had to do it well but we won't, how should I say... no particular initiatives, there were very few sort of Austrian initiatives. In 2006 we were more proactive, we had the Balkans' initiative... you know, it showed we were more masters at the game than we had been 8 years earlier. It's a normal learning curve.

Q: Ok. And concerning your experience more in the foreign policy field, as European correspondent... how was the adaptation to this new framework...?

A: Mainly for a small administration, I think in the beginning what you have to learn is how to cope with that flow of information. Because A) it speeds up the process enormously and B) you have to somehow sort through it, sort out the important stuff and that again is a learning curve. What you also have to be sort of careful about is that, how should I say...the atmosphere within the EU is, with partners...so we're actually quite straightforward with each other. You still to some degree respect the rules of diplomacy, you don't insult another person and you try to voice criticisms in a way that the other person doesn't feel, you know, attacked. But, the kind of extreme politeness that you get for example in the UN, where you have really rules of courtesy, to voice whatever you won't to voice in a very indirect and circumspect way. The EU is much more straightforward because we are European partners and we're sort of ?. It changed a little bit with the new comers because they come with a different historic experience; you sometimes have to be more careful to really be honest; they carry more chips on their shoulders than we had when we were 15, because the 15 were roughly on the same economic level. ... When an Austrian talks to a Czech, it's always, you know, sort of ~fueled with historic issues and baggage, and countries like Bulgaria, Romania, they came in with a low economic level so you have to be more cautious with those. But it still a reasonably open and frank process. So there is a difference with normal diplomatic life. Because in normal diplomatic life, you try to be very circumspect, especially in the UN, where I had the most foreign policy experience, you have to be extremely careful how you phrase what to say, because sensitivities are (laughs) rather important.

Q: So, when you were European correspondent, were you quite familiar with your counterparts...

A: Yeah, but I have to say that the whole system changed in 2000 with the introduction of the Political and Security Committee in Brussels. Before we would meet every 10 days. There was a Political Committee meeting where political directors went and their side kicks so to say were the European correspondent. So we had meetings before political directors would come in, we would sort of clean the agenda of the more routine items. So I would know my 14, or 15 including the Commission, really well; so they were, I wouldn't say friends but people I know very well.

Q: And you knew what they thought, their position...

A: Yeah, yeah. You would know exactly who would intervene on what... Presumably that's still the case, in the PSC I'm sure they not exactly when the Greek will show up ... you know your partners reasonably well, even at 27; it has become more complex but there's still a solid knowledge of each other.

Q: Ok. How would you react as a European correspondent if a member state took a position without consulting the others? Or, conversely, to what extent was it conceivable for the Austrian foreign ministry to take a position without consulting the others?

A: That depends, I mean... CFSP is a slightly different ball game than the whole community area; on foreign policy it's more fluid. Theoretically the treaty foresees that you shouldn't act against what has been agreed within CFSP. And over the years and decades, of course CFSP has established quite a strong acquis; so, there's the position on the Middle East, there's the position on ..., you know. But it still only a framework so there are, there's a certain room of maneuver within that. And I suppose you just accepted as life that...the larger EU countries would do what they want, I mean... (small laughs). Especially the

two Security Council members ... will do what they think is right and they will inform but not necessarily consult the others before they do something. So it is a bit of a constant struggle. Where we would voice criticisms in the beginning, for example, is when you had these contact groups; so special groups for certain issue, especially on the Balkans, we were very unhappy with smaller groupings and we would voice that. Because there we had pronounced interests, I mean Austria at the time was the closest MS, together with Italy; geographically we had refugees... so bypassing us in that was more difficult... It's still happen, I don't say it doesn't happen, but it would be something where we would be rather critical. Nevertheless, it's a fact that, especially the four largest MS, but in particular the two in the UN Security Council take freedoms which might not be wholly compatible with what the treaty says.

Q: Concerning the COREU... formal rules...?

A: The rules are that it's supposed to be a CFSP network, not used for first or third pillar issues. It's sort of, ~crippingly, I think it has been used more and more also for those issues, which it isn't quite as it should be. ... it's a bit.... Sanctions for example are a political tool but it's a first pillar issue, so it shouldn't run by our COREU but every now and then it does happen. But there are rules... what kind of confidentiality level; the fact that you're not supposed to use bilateral COREUs (because there's a possibility to communicate bilaterally)...between MS it's only between the presidency and one MS and only for specific cases. So there are clearly rules. But my knowledge would have to be updated... to know what the current rules are. But at the time I left in 2001, I think we had long pasted the 10,000 per year mark I have no idea where we are now but it must be 20,000 to Because we were 15 when I left and now we're 27... which means it's just literally hard to handle the inflow.

Q: When you started to use the COREU...

A: You learn very quickly because you see what the others write. What the COREU is for is information sharing and the main bulk is the presidency sends draft proposals (declarations, common positions, etc.) and you comment: and you say line x we would suggest to use phrase x because it's... you know, this is too harsh, this is too soft, this is... so it's rather easy. And drafting in English was never a problem for us. During the presidency we always made a point of writing the COREUs in French as well; that's a bit harder because none of us use French that often.

Q: ok. Around 1995, at the beginning of your EU membership, what was the mood of your colleagues in general about this new membership?

A: I think overall we were totally delighted of going in; I think the vast majority of my colleagues was in favor of the EU membership. Because when you go it alone as a comparatively small country in the world, you realize that you don't influence much and that you're driven by ? that are outside your control. So by joining something that's much bigger and where you have to...– yes it's driven by the larger countries, no question, still you can influence the decision-making process; you're in rather than you know, sidelined. So I think the vast majority was happy. I think the oldest colleagues had a bit of a problem adapting; not everybody was flexible enough to just... to really, but I think, how I should I say, it also happened, for us the changes were so enormous from the 1980's to the mid-1990's: Cold War ended, Yugoslavia ended, I mean it's just...so our world changed completely, the world we as diplomat we were operating in changed completely and EU membership then was sort of added to that. But it would have changed anyway, massively. So...(interruption) So, there was a lot of adapting to do. Plus, communications changed completely in that period. I mean, when I first went to New York in 1990, you know cell phones were just coming in... and within 5 years everybody had one, or 10 years perhaps. Computers: when I started.... Internet: mid-1990's... So the way we communicate, the way we work, the way we do research; it all changed completely in that period. And it sort of coincided for us with EU membership, so within that same period of massive change we also had the EU. So I think maybe for some of the older, not that flexible colleagues, it was a hard change. ... So overall, yes I think we were happy to join, but it was a massive change, no question, it took ~a lot of work to get used.

Q: Ok. One of the last thing I would like to talk about it the sort of Haider episode in 2000; you were European correspondent at that time, so how was it for you to cope with that situation?

A: The answer is it was really very difficult; it gave us a hint of what it's like to be a country under sanctions, representing a country under sanctions; it led to personal...slides; my French colleague wouldn't shake hands anymore, that kind of thing, which I have to say it left a mark. I think, those of us who lived through it rather intensely, I think it made us realize: a) how should I say, if there are rules, because the sanctions actually contravened the EU rules, no question about that, it shouldn't have happened the way it did and it shouldn't have... the presidency shouldn't have played the role it played; this was all outside the treaty and illegal. The organ that was the most fair was the Commission and I think it gave us a taste of "you need rules", you need a supranational body that acts in the European interest, not in the kind of national interests as MS gvts we do. That is a safeguard, that is a body that will treat you

fairly and according to the rules. Because it's based on those rules. I think there is a trauma, there's no question; it left a trauma in Austria, it left a trauma in other smaller countries because it clearly showed that if some larger countries wants to do something against the smaller MS they will do.

Q: And you personally, what would you do? Did you try, for example, to meet more people to limit the damages...

A: It, it...yes I mean that's the job of diplomats, we were supposed to reestablish good ties. The problem is that, what it taught is that good contacts or seemingly good contacts, friendly relations, obviously don't count when there's something bigger at play here. I think, you can somehow read it... it had repercussions on Austrian public opinion and on Austrian opinion on the EU... It did give us this feeling that, before we got you know "it's good for a small countries to be part and you have a say, etc."; it made us realize there are, you know... some animals are more equal than others; larger countries will do what they want and that you can be quite helpless as a small country. And how far you can limit damage there and how much it helps to have different contacts... it was a bit of a disappointing experience as well because we thought we had very good contacts and we thought we had established close ties with a lot of countries and just even the fact that we weren't warned in time; it really came as a surprise; on the contrary we had actually been told that the problems had been solved by the Portuguese presidency, which played a rather an unfortunate role in this, uhh... it wasn't a good experience I have to say and I'm not quite sure and I'm not sure what kind of recipe there is to avoid something like that, there isn't, you know. If the constellations were the same, I think we'd go through the same treatment again. The EU of course has learned from it, it has learned that it was a stupid thing to do, it didn't do any good, it actually antagonized the Austrians, it gave small countries the feeling of helplessness and of being at the mercy of the larger countries. And as we could all see, when Italy had a government of similar composition 2 years later we... So that's the way it is. It left its mark here, definitely.

Entrevue 11 (Historien de la politique étrangère autrichienne)
Université de Vienne, 3 juillet 2009

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Volskereichsburo : avait toujours la réputation d'être l'élite du ministère. C'est d'ailleurs très simple à comprendre parce que comme petit État, qu'est-ce que vous avez ? Vous avez rien mais le droit, le droit international en l'occurrence, c'est qqch d'extrêmement important pour un petit État qui n'a pas d'autre levier. Et dans le contexte des relations difficiles avec l'URSS, il fallait vraiment être du bon côté de l'expertise du droit...les Soviétiques avaient leur propre vision du droit international... Donc on avait dans la diplomatie autrichienne des spécialistes de la vision soviétique du droit international ; on savait tous qu'ils pensaient et on essayait de les comprendre d'abord pour ensuite élaborer nos positions. Il fallait aussi tenir compte de la position suisse et tout ça. Donc il y avait de grosses têtes toujours là sur place. Et il y avait une grande perméabilité entre le Volskereichsburo et l'Institut de droit international de l'Université de Vienne ; les personnes changeait de postes...il y avait toujours des contrats de consultants ; les assistants de l'Institut faisaient toujours leurs stages dans le Volskerrectburo...donc il y avait une grande connivence, familiarité disons les deux. Le doyen du droit international en Autriche vit encore : Zemanek ; a été le consultant du ministère pendant des décennies... (Neuhold était son assistant)... son successeur fut Gerhard Hafner, qui est professeur. Bref, pour comprendre la diplomatie autrichienne, les juristes sont importants.

Q : Années 1950, neutralité...

A : ... Il était d'une importance capitale pour l'Autriche de chercher toutes les apparences possibles et imaginables qui aideraient à éviter cette impression de neutralité imposée. Pour éviter d'entrer automatiquement dans une dépendance totale de son interprétation par rapport à l'URSS. Donc politiquement il était capital pour l'Autriche de répéter, de ne cesser de répéter, à tout le monde et à toute occasion que c'est une neutralité librement choisie. C'est nous qui en dispose, évidemment en respectant le droit international, mais le droit n'est pas encore de la politique et la politique dite de neutralité, en d'autres termes la politique étrangère, reste notre politique. Évidemment historiquement les choses sont un peu différentes. Or elles ne sont pas aussi simples que certains critiques de la neutralité la présentaient, en s'opposant à cette présentation officielle et en disant non ce n'est pas du tout librement choisi, c'est imposé. Évidemment il y a un aspect d'imposition, c'est clair, parce que l'acceptation du statut de neutralité a été une des conditions sine qua non pour obtenir le traité d'État. Or, on ne peut pas en rester là...ce n'était pas la seule condition. Il y avait des conditions économiques par exemple. Ce n'était pas en acceptant la neutralité que l'Autriche a obtenu le traité d'État, même si c'était une chose extrêmement

importante. Deuxièmement, oui l'Autriche a accepté, mais ce qui était beaucoup plus surprenant c'est que l'Union soviétique l'ait acceptée. Parce que l'URSS a dû disons changer de discours ou de conception de neutralité autrichienne, pour trouver un terrain commun avec les alliés occidentaux, notamment les Etats-Unis. Jusqu'en 1954, l'URSS a demandé de l'Autriche une neutralité qui n'était qu'un mot pour une politique amicale. Et celle-ci consistait à renoncer à toute opposition politique à l'URSS sur la scène internationale. Donc nous approchons là d'une sorte de vision de finlandisation. Et là les Autrichiens et les Occidentaux en général ont toujours dit non, pour toute une série de raisons. En 1954, en marge de la conférence de Berlin, fin janvier-début février, il y a eu cette fameuse scène où le secrétaire d'État américain de l'époque, Fuster Dulls disait à Molotov, nous acceptons un statut de neutralité pour l'Autriche sous condition que ce soit un statut sur le modèle suisse et que ce ne soit pas imposée mais que ce soit l'Autriche qui la donne, que ce soit symboliquement l'expression d'un choix autonome. Et surtout que ce soit le modèle suisse : économie pleinement intégrée dans le modèle occidental. Donc c'était un autre modèle que le modèle soviétique et Molotov disait non. Et il a fallu plus d'un an pour que l'URSS change de position. ...donc il faut voir que les positions se sont rapprochées des deux côtés... Le statut de neutralité a été une condition occidentale qui finalement a été acceptée par les Soviétiques. Maintenant, c'est encore beaucoup plus compliqué quand on regarde les détails parce que les Soviétiques ont réussi à arracher aux Autrichiens à Moscou une déclaration d'intention qui valait politiquement l'adoption de la neutralité mais ce n'était pas un accord juridique, du moins pas un accord juridique accepté par toutes les parties contractantes y compris les Occidentaux. Et la neutralité, contrairement à ce qu'on lit dans les manuels, n'a pas été déclarée seulement le 26 octobre mais dès le mois de juin par une résolution du Parlement. Mais c'était une résolution, un calendrier très strict, chaque côté faisait un pas pour se rapprocher...et tout culminait dans l'expiration du délai pour le retrait des troupes alliées, délai qui expirait le 25 octobre par hasard. Et le 26 octobre, premier jour de pleine souveraineté, a été donc l'occasion d'adopter cette loi mais ce n'était pas une surprise bien sûr parce qu'on l'avait annoncé, le gouvernement s'était porté garant, le Parlement ensuite, et puis on l'a effectivement fait. Politiquement, historiquement, la neutralité a été un élément essentiel du règlement du problème autrichien en 1955, il n'y a aucun doute...les aspects juridiques, les aspects symboliques sont importants, mais les rapports de force sont également clairs. En même temps, l'Autriche a réussi à avoir quand même une certaine marge de manœuvre, qui était importante, mais qui dépendait pas seulement de l'URSS mais de l'Autriche elle-même. Et là-dessus, personnellement, mais c'est un débat hein, je crois que les Autrichiens, disons le gouvernement autrichien, la diplomatie autrichienne, aimait parfois se cacher derrière un rideau de droit international, de contraintes, etc. En vérité c'était un choix politique...on prenait les éléments de droit international là où on en avait besoin. Et dans la question européenne, ce n'était pas clair du tout en 1955 ; en 1954 vous avez encore une sorte de mémorandum, un message du gvt aux diplomates, après la Conférence de Berlin, les Soviétiques demandaient la neutralité – et demandaient, parce que...j'ai oublié de dire ça, les Soviétiques demandaient une neutralité d'un certain type ET le maintien de troupes, et donc les Soviétiques ont accepté en 1955 d'abord le modèle suisse puis le retrait des troupes. Ça c'est un élément essentiel ; c'est pourquoi dans la loi de neutralité, vous avez un élément essentiel ; pas de base militaire ni d'alliance, et pas de base militaire c'est essentiel parce que les Soviétiques l'avaient toujours demandé, pour garder un pied en Autriche. Et pour les Autrichiens c'était inacceptable. Et d'ailleurs évidemment toujours sur l'arrière-plan de la question allemande, c'était toujours ça ; le modèle autrichien pouvait desservir la politique occidentale en Allemagne, y compris les intérêts autrichiens, qui étaient du côté occidental. Alors le retrait intégral des troupes soviétiques, avant même que l'Autriche ne consacre officiellement son statut de neutralité, a été très très important. Mais en 1954, le gvt disait encore, oui les Soviétiques ont demandé la neutralité, sous condition de maintenir des troupes, ça déjà c'est inacceptable ; de même la neutralité ne pose problème parce que nous sommes déjà dans le plan Marschall (OECE) nous voudrions y rester. Nous voulons entrer, enfin au moins nous garder l'option d'intégrer le Conseil de l'Europe et la CECA... À ce moment il y a une conscience du danger que pouvait représenter un statut de neutralité C'était en février et la fameuse conception officielle suisse de la neutralité, qui excluait une intégration de communauté supranationale, ne date que du mois de novembre. Et il y a eu sans doute des contacts secrets, ça nous le savons, entre Vienne et Berne, et Kreisky a fait un voyage secret, etc. mais il nous manque beaucoup d'éléments de documentation. Et fin 1954, début 1955, mars-avril-mai 1955, c'était une question qu'on préférerait ne pas évoquer. J'ai trouvé des documents qui disent que le ministre des affaires étrangères de l'époque et le chancelier ont rassuré les diplomates occidentaux, notamment les diplomates français, non non, nous ne nous lions pas les mains; nous pouvons – nous n'accepterons rien qui nous empêcherait...de l'option d'entrer dans le conseil de l'Europe et la CECA. Mais après on en parlait plus et dès l'été 1955 on commence à entendre des voix à Balhausplatz : oui, ça devient compliqué, on a peut-être pas le droit de le faire... à mon avis, mais c'est un peu un débat, la question reste ouverte

jusqu'en automne 1956 et que ce n'est qu'à l'automne 1956, sous l'impression, mais peut-être pas en raison de, la crise en Hongrie, l'Autriche commence à adopter officiellement la doctrine que statut de neutralité et pleine intégration dans une communauté supranationale sont incompatibles ; c'est un long chemin. Et donc le modèle suisse, qui n'est pas dans la loi constitutionnelle, seulement dans le mémorandum de Moscou... peut-être aussi à cause de cela ; on ne voulait pas être obligé de copier la politique suisse... le souci premier c'était de gagner une marge de manœuvre. Mais c'est devenu une véritable doctrine, une doctrine de base sous l'ère Kreisky ; Kreisky a beaucoup insisté là-dessus et à mon avis c'était aussi une instrumentalisation ; parce que, il avait d'autres intérêts que le droit international pour garder une certaine distance par rapport à la Communauté . D'autant plus est-il devenu difficile dans les années 1980 de faire le virage, parce qu'il y avait toute une génération de jeunes diplomates, de spécialistes du droit international, de politologues, qui a été élevée dans ce dogme de l'incompatibilité, donc il fallait leur laver le crâne, ce qu'on a effectivement fait.

Q : À quel moment exactement et pourquoi décide-t-on qu'il faut changer l'interprétation de la l'incompatibilité...

A : On va changer l'interprétation quand on aura décidé de ce qu'on veut faire. Et c'est là à mon avis un beau spectacle, si vous voulez, qui éclaire un peu la véritable hiérarchie des priorités : c'est la politique d'abord et le droit ensuite. On a les experts qui nous écriront les bonnes expertises, et au besoin si on ne les trouve pas en Autriche, on les trouvera en Allemagne ! Et c'était très, très, très ironique ; la fameuse expertise demandée par la Industrial... l'Association des entrepreneurs autrichiens pour analyser cette compatibilité ou non, a été demandée à un prof à Innsbruck qui était un peu marginalisé et à un Autrichien je crois qui n'a pas trouvé de poste en Autriche – ce dernier avait écrit sa thèse d'habilitation sur la neutralité et l'intégration européenne, et il avait la mauvaise chance de développer une thèse qui allait à l'encontre de la thèse autrichienne. Donc le pauvre type a fini sa carrière à Passau, ce qui n'est pas une des plus grandes universités allemandes hein. Mais on s'est souvenu de lui et en 1987 donc, les deux ont pondu un gros livre qui démontrait que enfin, c'était quand même compatible ; il y avait quand même des petits problèmes qu'il fallait réparer dans le cadre du traité d'adhésion, mais ce n'est pas le statut de neutralité qui nous empêche d'intégrer la CE ; voilà c'est ce que l'association des industriels voulait entendre et ce qui a rassuré le gouvernement. Et même, les diplomates et les juristes ont fini par l'accepter. Et Kreisky, quand on le lit de près, on se rend compte qu'il était très ouvert dans son discours, il disait beaucoup plus qu'on ne le croirait ; et Kreisky... enfin il y un passage clé dans une conférence de presse quand il défend la ratification du traité qui fonde l'AELE (EFTA)...et quand tout le débat remonte, pourquoi ne pas adhérer à l'AELE, il dit à un moment, « ben écoutez, que des experts de droit international discutent de cette question c'est une chose ; qu'un petit pays, doit en discuter avec une grande puissance en est une autre ». Alors il y a là, c'était un aveu si vous voulez...il y a un choix politique à faire, et Kreisky a dit à plusieurs reprises, et c'était un credo, que la priorité essentielle pour l'Autriche c'est la diminution des tensions internationales en Europe centrale. Donc, à quoi sert de marcher sur les pieds de l'URSS sans arrêt, même si on a le droit de le faire, mais ça sert à quoi ? Ça nous crée plus de difficultés que nous résolvons en intégrant les Communautés en en essayant de nous arranger autrement...et d'améliorer nos relations avec l'URSS, de contribuer à la détente. C'était là la priorité. Il y avait également des raisons de politique intérieure, qui étaient importantes à mon avis, qui se cachaient un peu derrière ce discours de politique extérieure.

Q : ... quid lien avec l'affaire Waldheim ?

A : ... je crois qu'il y avait accumulation de crises dans la première moitié des années 1980. La crise économique a finalement rattrapé l'Autriche qui croyait pouvoir s'en échapper. Crise économique qui se traduisait par une crise de l'économie étatisée, crise financière. Plus, crise de l'establishment politique ; il y avait un scandale après l'autre. Et quand vous additionnez les deux vous avez une crise du système autrichien, qui d'abord a été encore le modèle autrichien, qui maintenant devient un problème. En même temps vous avez une crise d'image, qui est la crise Waldheim, mais qui est en même temps une crise intérieure, une crise de conscience historique disons... Peter Jankowitsch (en temps que ministre) écrivait d'ailleurs dans une fameuse lettre aux historiens autrichiens, mais écoutez ce qu'écrit cet historien britannique sur l'Autriche, c'est absolument scandaleux, c'est à l'encontre de la vision que nous avons de nous-mêmes... et nous on disait, excusez-nous cher ministre mais c'est ce que nous écrivons depuis 10 ans. Alors vous avez ça et 3^e élément, vous avez une dynamique du côté européen, le projet de marché unique, qui remet l'Autriche un peu dans la même situation qu'elle a connue en 1955-56 avec la relance du projet de marché commun européen. Parce que l'Autriche avait trouvé un certain équilibre avec les Communautés au début des années 1970 et Kreisky avait la grande chance de recueillir les fruits d'un processus de rapprochement entamé au début des années 1960. Mais en 1973 avec l'adhésion de la G-B et le désamorçage de la « bombe » (du blocage) britannique, on pouvait dans la foulée arracher ces

accords commerciaux qui créaient un bon équilibre et cet équilibre a été gravement mis en danger par le projet de marché unique. Et en négociant une nouvelle solution d'ancien type, i.e. accord de non-discrimination en quelque sorte sans participation pleine et entière, on s'est rendu compte que les conditions maintenant sont tellement discriminatoires au niveau politique que les négociateurs du traité du European Economic Area (Espace économique européen) étaient les premiers à expliquer à leur ministre, c'est pas possible, on a ce qu'on veut mais nous allons devoir nous acheter de bonnes photocopieuses au Parlement parce qu'il nous reste plus grand chose d'autre à faire qu'à copier exactement les lois de Bruxelles. Et là on en vient à l'écroulement de cette fiction de la souveraineté pleine et entière, qui n'a jamais été une vision vraiment correcte, mais une vision utile, disons une pause, un habitus nécessaire. Mais là on commençait à distinguer entre souveraineté formelle et souveraineté réelle. Et là les diplomates ont compris que en s'accrochant à la souveraineté formelle, on perdait la souveraineté réelle. Et c'était un processus intellectuel de différenciation, d'analyse, qui a mis un certain nombre d'années, Scheich a joué un rôle clé pour convaincre Mock... mais finalement c'était un peu l'addition de tous ces facteurs qui explique le revirement. Et la crise intérieure s'est illustrée par la montée de nouveaux partis : à droite le FPÖ, à gauche les Verts. Et tout se passe en 1985-86, la chronologie est ahurissante hein!

Q : héritage de l'Empire...

A :... la vision courante, quasi exclusive jusqu'aux années 1990, que le problème d'identité, tout ça... c'est un problème d'identité nationale... me paraît inexacte. En fait il y a deux...un double problème d'identité ; le changement d'orientation nationale, c'est pas qu'on en avait pas avant mais on en avait une différente. Et le deuxième changement c'est le passage d'une grande puissance à un petit État, à deux reprises, en 1918 et en 1945. Les deux se recoupent dans cette identité autrichienne qui était la seule qui existait jusqu'en 1918 et même au-delà, avant l'invention de la nation autrichienne, c'était une identité impériale, de grande puissance, une identité à laquelle on s'accrochait d'autant plus que cette grande puissance n'était plus grande depuis le début du 19^e siècle, c'était une puissance que les autres grandes puissances protégeaient pour qu'il n'y ait pas de vacuum au centre de l'Europe, mais regardez l'Autriche en 1806, pour ne pas parler de 1809 ; c'était un protectorat français ! Et l'Autriche ne s'en ait jamais vraiment rétablie entièrement... oui il y avait Metternich, etc. mais son idée était justement : comment trouver un système qui marche sans que nous soyons vraiment puissants ? Évidemment, en introduisant cet élément de droit et de là s'explique l'idée de Concert européen, etc. etc. Parce que là on peut même en tant que « faible grande puissance » avoir encore un levier important, avec une tradition, etc. etc. En 1918 ça s'écroule, et le grand problème de 1918-19, c'est pas seulement le problème national, qui vient du besoin de remplir le vacuum, parce qu'il n'y a pas d'alternative acceptable à cette autre identité qui était plus importante auparavant que l'identité nationale, qui était l'identité que j'appelle impériale, par manque d'autres mots...c'est pas impérialiste, c'est l'idée du Reich, Kaiserreich Österreich. Et l'idée c'est d'être un grande puissance, un grand pays, de jouer dans la ligue des grands. Et toute la classe politique qui dominait les années 1920-30 était élevée dans cette mentalité, ce tout petit État, pour elle c'était tout simplement qqch de ridicule ! Et le problème c'était pas qu'on avait pas d'identité nationale autrichienne, c'était pas ça, il n'y avait pas d'identité autrichienne avant 1918 non plus, on en avait pas besoin ! Le problème c'est que ce petit État, qui dépendait de tout...on n'était pas habitués de dépendre économiquement de qqn d'autre...à l'époque c'était inimaginable pour ces générations... Et Kreisky est de cette génération...quand vous lisez ses mémoires – il y a une traduction américaine, mais elle est raccourcie – dans la partie sur sa jeunesse, très éclairante... c'est là où on comprend d'où il vient ; Kreisky c'est encore un enfant de l'Empire austro-hongrois... il raconte quand il faisait des ballades avec son oncle en Bohême et ailleurs... Comment faire une politique extérieure qui soit digne de ce nom, avec les moyens minables dont dispose un petit État ? Or, en analysant bien la situation, il a compris que la neutralité donnait des atouts, sous condition de détente, etc. etc. Enfin, la liste...il a inventé une vision de l'Autriche qui permettait à cette Autriche de jouer un rôle disproportionnellement plus grand qu'elle ne l'aurait joué normalement. Et moi je vois là-dedans une reprise d'une tradition, c'est-à-dire ce rêve de grandeur, mais un rêve disons non pas seulement adapté, acclimaté, mais sorti d'une catharsis, c'était l'expérience de l'échec impérial en 1918, de l'échec du rêve grand allemand entre 1938 et 1945, et donc de là ce réflexe antimilitariste, anti-impérialiste, mais en même temps, l'idée qu'on est quand même plus importants que les quelques de km² que l'on a en Autriche. Et quand les diplomates occidentaux entendent parler le chancelier autrichien, le ministre de politique internationale, eh ben vous avez des rapports qui disent « mais c'est très curieux, on vient ici à Vienne, c'est un petit pays...et il commence à nous expliquer la politique internationale ; c'est curieux, qu'est-ce qu'il croit ? Nous. nous venons de Washington, de Paris, nous sommes... » Et ça...pour les Autrichiens ça va de soit ; à Vienne on a toujours fait de la politique ! Et Kreisky il se voit dans la tradition de Karlitz(?)...c'est un peu ça. Alors il y a effectivement un élément de tradition et une volonté de reprendre en quelque sorte le fil. Mais, il faut

évidemment éviter le cliché absolument débile que c'était nostalgique dans le sens légitimiste, qu'on arrêta pas de jouer à l'Empire austro-hongrois ; au contraire, il y avait une distanciation totale par rapport aux Habsbourg dans l'enseignement de l'histoire, on était très critique...on est petits, on est qqch de différent, etc. Donc c'est pas une tradition superficielle mais c'est une tradition complètement transformée et d'autant plus authentique, si vous voulez, qu'elle est assimilée. Je crois que c'est effectivement important et sous cet angle-là, le grand problème d'adaptation pour la diplomatie autrichienne à partir de 1995, c'est de devoir changer complètement de registre. Parce que, jusqu'alors, on pouvait faire de la grande politique d'apparence ; les apparences comptaient ; on était sur scène quand Arafat venait à Vienne, quand Hadafi venait à Vienne, Nixon, Kennedy, Khrouchtchev, Brejnev, Ford, etc. Le téléspectateur voyait, voilà on est importants. Et dans l'UE, eh bien ça ne marche plus ; on peut être important comme petit pays, sous condition d'en éviter l'apparence. C'est le contraire de ce qui avait avant ! Et c'est très difficile ; d'abord c'est pas bon pour l'appréciation qu'on a de soi-même et le besoin de se montrer au public, ni du côté des hommes politiques, ni du côté des diplomates. Et c'est difficile parce qu'il faut maintenant développer d'autres talents. On en avait pas du tout l'habitude, de faire vraiment de la politique internationale sur toutes les questions ; oui quand on était au Conseil de sécurité mais c'était pas tous les jours, alors que maintenant c'est tous les jours... il faut avoir une avoir une position et si on en a pas, et bien, on est hors jeu. On peut dire oui à la fin mais on n'y contribue pas. Contribuer aujourd'hui c'est être vraiment au courant et se spécialiser sur certains dossiers où on est vraiment experts. Et heureusement qu'il y avait une certaine expertise au Balhausplatz, notamment sur les Balkans, et qu'on a donc pu jouer sur ce registre. Mais l'expert autrichien sera entendu à Bruxelles aussi longtemps que ce ne sera pas une proposition autrichienne officielle si vous voulez dans les journaux. Quand dans les journaux autrichiens que les Autrichiens ont imposé telle ou telle position à Bruxelles, et bien on ne les écouterait plus parce que c'est inacceptable. Donc c'est une politique qui ne se vend plus et jouer le jeu communautaire, c'est qqch de, à mon avis de très nouveau, difficilement compatible avec toute la tradition établie depuis 1955, et une rupture d'autant plus grande qu'on l'avoue. À mon avis... parfois les gens vous le disent...l'ancien commissaire Fischler, par exemple, l'a expliqué à plusieurs reprises ; il a écrit dans les journaux, dans des livres, l'Autriche n'est pas encore vraiment arrivée dans l'UE, mentalement.

Q : D'accord, alors ça a été difficile pour les diplomates sénior, qui étaient habitués à autre chose...

A : ...en même temps il y en avait qui changeaient facilement de veste, et il y en avait pour qui c'était l'accomplissement d'un rêve ; c'était le fruit défendu d'abord et maintenant on pouvait le cueillir...pour toute une partie notamment de diplomates plutôt côté ÖVP, qui était quand même plus ouvert vers les Communautés, jeunes militants européens, etc., pour eux c'était un rêve qui devenait réalité. Mais c'était pas nécessairement la majorité...

Entretien 12-13

MAE (DG III) 6 juillet 2009

Note : mini entretien 12 (non enregistré) en attendant l'interviewé 13

Ent. 13 :

...

A: Now, for almost 3 years, I have been head of dep. III.5, which is in charge of Coreper I... also responsible for economic bilateral relations with EU countries and transposition...law infringement procedures for the ECJ. But main body of work is supervising the Coreper I, formulating the Austrian position. Plus employment...

Q: So I guess you interact a lot with the other ministries?

A: Yes, on a regular basis. We have an inter-ministerial meeting once a week and during this meeting, the Austrian position is clarified with the ministries. Certain issues of coordination between ministries are settled and we get an outlook at involvement of social partners...

Q: And how do you find this process of coordination; is it hard, etc.?

A: Since enlargement, especially since the first round in 2004, but also since our accession really, we have found that it gets smoother and easier...

Q: And do you communicate often with your European counterparts?

A: Not really, depends of the presidency. There have been Council presidencies where this has been more intense; say with Germany, with Slovenia (2008) where we had a special emphasis and focus on helping them to carry through the presidency by voicing and administering our help when it was requested. But

also our advice was needed because of our experience of 2 presidencies. Especially with smaller countries I would say, but on the whole it differs from presidency to presidency.

A: Ok, so your closest partners are smaller countries...

A: Yes, I would say our neighbouring countries have always been an emphasis, and especially the newly acceded countries, the Czechs, close cooperation; Slovaks... and if only by trade, investments, etc. already close ties with Germany and Italy. But it is not really a matter of size; it depends also on the acting people; it's not just a matter of sympathy between nations and historical ties...

Q: Ok. How do you proceed – strategy, etc. - to develop the Austrian position...?

A: Well, in the case of the very complicated directive on services – issue settled during the Austrian presidency and by now has not been transposed... In this case, when it appears on the agenda of the Commission... internally in Austria the ministry concerned, which is guiding the process, in charge... as soon as this ministry is designated, it convenes an inter-ministerial meeting with all the ministries and stakeholders (social partners, etc.) which are involved. And then there is a long lengthy process of common decision-making process through the working groups, contacts with the European Parliament, and finally Coreper I... etc. ... dossiers are dealt with by inter-ministerial meetings in view of particular Coreper I meeting and Council meeting. Generally, there would be a big meeting where all dossiers for a particular Council are dealt with; that has been made much smoother over the last 10-12 years... we witnessed that everything has become much more efficient.. in certain cases heads of department don't need to attend the meetings, they are replaced by their coordinators. Because by now... the early stages go so well that no need for important decisions in the last preparatory meetings before the Council. So that shows that things have been better and better prepared over time.

Q: In all the process, is it important to get to know what the other MS think, etc.?

A: Yes, yes it is. But that side of things is normally dealt with by the main ministry in charge, which inform all the other ministries, including ours, of what the positions of the other countries are. For instance, GMO... we would see what's the other countries' opinions; where do we meet; where do we have different nuances between the opinions. We (our ministry) are sort of the "fire-engine" in the case of emergencies, when the people in charge from the other ministries, which work in the working groups together with their peers from other MS, don't reach an agreement and cannot find a solution to a particular problem. Or when, due to some constraints, the negotiations get bogged down, then occasionally we would intervene and try, by our embassy network to directly intervene in the capitals of the other country. That has happened for instance during our first presidency in 1998, when we were dealing with the Sixth framework Program and the decision-making about that program, we found ourselves in delay, there were still very stringent differences of opinion between various countries and we were finally forced to intervene alongside the main ministry dealing with the dossier, intervene through the capitals... And this occasionally happens; it happens maybe twice a year on average but not more often. Normally the dossiers are very well dealt with by the ministers in charge; they prepare everything for the Council meeting where decisions are being taken.

Q: You talked about the presidency in 1998; how was this first experience....?

A: At that time we prepared very well although I was basically coming back from abroad, from Slovenia, just about 8 months before, but most of the preparation period I was able to witness. I would say that the preparation was very systematic; we talked very much in terms of emergencies, of going through our working program but in the end, it was a much much smaller engine we were driving at that time. Because the presidency in 2006 was already a presidency of 25 MS whereas before it was 15 countries with ourselves. And that was a great difference. There was much more need for discussion. On the one hand, we were much better trained, because we knew what would be happening; we had sort of a blueprint of what a presidency looks like, although we learned from the first presidency that you cannot prepare for the unexpected; you have to have some reserve troops to enter the fray when the battle gets going on other subjects than you had prepared. And we didn't realize that during the first presidency how the whole agenda can be basically hijacked by a few issues, like gas deliveries from Russia a new crisis in the Middle East or, etc. And that means you have to put a lot of resources into... you cannot be very well prepared for that... it just happens out of the blue. So our feeling was that we needed to... we were much more confident, we put more resources into the day to day business... and we had many more meetings, many more things on our agenda, not only more countries, but more things... more important meetings. But our administration was much better trained and I would say there were fewer situations where we had to hurry and improvise... that was my feeling that during the first presidency we often found ourselves improvising whereas in the second presidency everything was really planned and there were much better contingency plans for when something would happen. And we had also... steering groups... an executive secretariat (my boss here was head of the executive secretariat) and that was an outfit which was provided

with better resources and a better overview during the second presidency. In the first presidency, we had to pretty much find out how it can operate and the whole terrain was new. We found on the whole we were much better prepared on the second presidency; we prepared better for emergencies... and it was a much bigger thing ... big meeting on Latin America organized here in Vienna.

Q: And how was it to adapt to the EU at the very beginning of Austria's accession? I think you were in a bilateral posting at the time but still it might have affected your work?

A: What happened then is that I could experience that the cooperation, the head of mission's meetings were at great intervals and there was less... I think there's much closer cooperation in between the meetings now. And the whole thing is much smoother because all ambassadors would have had the knowledge of such meetings. At that time, in Slovenia in 1995-1996, we were one of the new kids on the block ☺ and we were definitely not really, I mean we were not given the feeling that we were second grade but we were not as trained to discuss everything; it was all new for us at that time and there were still some adapting problems; when we had to ask back at the center in Vienna it was more laborious to get the answers and so on. I think that is probably much smoother, although I don't have the recent experience in one of our embassy. Actually, the new member countries would now probably be, at that time they were honorary guests, now they're fully members of the group and so it's much more smooth to working together. Also I think the information we got for the next presidency – everything that was sent out from Brussels, everything was probably less focused, less encompassing as concerns information value, as what is now available to our 40 embassies, 12, 14 years later, that cannot be compared probably, independently from our accession. So much better information today and what we do with this information is 10 times better. I think with fewer resources because definitely, okay, during the second presidency our staff was probably a fraction larger, but not so much large as the workload increased and we managed very well and smoothly. And I think now for the day to day business we probably have so few people as we never had before, even though the Lisbon treaty is not yet transposed, and basically the work has got more and more over the years. Lisbon will mark ? because definitely certain duties will wander to the European External Action Service, will be dealt by different institutions and other forms of cooperation so by next year, probably this section will be in transformation, as in every other country. But so far, the work has really got more and more over the last 12-13 years. And from what I could see from abroad and from here, with fewer people actually, I think more work and more targeted relevant work is being done. Possibly 12 years ago we were doing more things which were more, not marginal, but not as important as others; everything was taken as equally important. Whereas now, I think we have a better overview of what are the most important tasks and what can be dealt on a ? basically.

Q: Do you see a difference between officials like you, working on the EU, and officials not working on the EU?

A: Yeah, a secret difference? Most other coordinators from other ministries have themselves an intimate knowledge of coordination Brussels by having been there by... Most have in house EU experience of some kind... Now the administration hires a lot of people who have first-hand experience from various quarters and various view points of EU work; from Brussels, from Vienna; they have even swapped ministries...like now a delegate who works for the ministry of economic affairs now, she has moved from the coordination desk of the ministry of agricultural affairs, so they have experience from several EU coordination units of several ministries. That has changed a lot. By then, everybody was a novice, was totally unexperienced in EU work. Even before I came, everything I had to learn, I had to learn in Sofia or Ljubljana, in the intercourse of a few years, and that was still when we were outside the EU... not a lot of information from Brussels.

Q: What are differences, in the functioning of the ministry, between before and after the EU membership?

A: I think... before 1995, this DG was basically the unit leading the EU accession negotiations. After that, ... now we produce the Austrian position as a MS. It was a total shift of outlook, of duties within this section. And I would say that we have had to become acquainted with an information flow which is much more intense. ... which is much more intricate; where we are not spared in the information. And on every information we try to act and do something about it. And we have also been the section dealing with the Austrian presence within the EU because we thought for a small country it is particularly relevant to be represented at all levels, within the Commission, but also within the Council Secretariat and within the administration of the European Parliament. So we've tried to make Brussels, which is not always easy, more attractive for Austrian civil servants. Because Brussels has some disadvantages, in some ways it's not as attractive as Vienna, so we don't have the problem of... Vienna is one of the towns, together with ..., which is one of the most attractive cities to live in and be professionally active, with all the concomitant "no crime", very good schools for the children, etc. So it has been very difficult to shift Austrians, although they would earn more working for the Commission, to Brussels and make Brussels

attractive to them. And in fact, we have not been filing the posts as much as countries like Sweden, Finland or, for that matter, Luxembourg or the Czech Republic...

Q: Ok. For diplomats in particular is it attractive to go to Brussels?

A: It is uhh, it is attractive (not very convinced tone) uhh... I mean for diplomats certainly in some ways uhh, lots do it because it is an advancement in the career it can be an interesting specialisation in their career. But I would say it's possibly more attractive for people in other ministries because they don't have... we have, like all diplomats in all countries, the possibility to move abroad, so Brussels is only one abroad and not even the most attractive by all standards. Whereas officials in the other ministries, for them it's the only chance to work abroad to go to Brussels. So it's much more ? and they're very eager to get jobs there.

Q: If you had to change post now, would you be eager to go on a bilateral posting or continue to work for EU matters directly?

A: Bilateral contacts now...this is mainly a bilateral responsibility but most of the bilateral ... producing factsheets and specialized information... memorandums written in some cases... main body of bilateral work is being dealt with by our political section.

I would definitely be very eager to go on a bilateral posting, if only because possibly by now I could be head mission/ambassador and it would be a change from I've been doing for the last 11 years. But it's not that I'm desperate here... I find this work quite interesting, it's a very specialized work, the more you understand of it the better you become and the more it interests you and you get interested in the main dossiers; ... it's a little much at first, but when you've worked for a couple of years you know which dossiers are more important, so you learn to prioritize. And I would say that's just as interesting work and fascinating... because it's the main, I mean what the EU does affects the life of the citizens much more than traditional foreign policy; policy on Zimbabwe or Middle East... ..

Q: Would you say that the ministry devotes enough resources to its role within the EU?

A: I would say that, we are in some ways at the limits. We have now a stringent program for economising on employees; we have to economize on business trips, overtime... ? so basically, the public administration has, like in all countries, to become slimmer and slimmer and that uhh... I feel that we could not economize much more. Lisbon will mean that some of our departments will be freed of some of the workload and some of the work will be transferred in Brussels. So possibly we will need fewer people or we will find a much better... we will go along with the work we have to do in a much better way with fewer people in a year's time than now. But at the moment I feel that things could go strained (?); most departments don't have any reserves (in terms of personnel) if there is additional work, like now we have to... (example given). So we help each other out from department to department and... this is one very big advantage we've always worked as a team... this is basically a new modern way of ... our duties.

Q: quid exchanges of diplomats?

A: Definitely, in the long period I've been here - for over 12 years - there have been people from many countries, I would say from Hungary, Germany, Croatia; there has been a person from Poland during our second presidency. So we have learned since 1998, when we started... just a couple of months after I came here, in January 1998, the Germans started working here for half a year during the time for our first presidency. And from what I observe, we have learned... in the whole section there have been several dozens - Lithuanians, Latvians - I have also a Latvian working for us during the presidency - we have two, Polish and a Latvian lady. We have become much more open to this instrument, more flexible; we try to give them the full experience and to show them everything; at the beginning we were a little, for instance... needless to say, Germans had the presidency immediately after us and while we had this German department during our presidency, it was not always easy because certain initiatives were still ? and we didn't want to involve other countries. So we were careful about information flow. This has changed and we are much more transparent now. And it's a way of realising that we are one family and that we all work together, it's no use of hiding... It's clear that if we feel that our ideas are being picked by other countries then probably we'd still be careful if we want to launch an initiative ourselves. But that happens very rarely, mostly we have information which we can easily share. It's matter of change of culture.

Q: details about German in the ministry....

A: One German person, he was basically allotted to me and he was dealing with my little tiny unit... he was also co-preparing the Coreper and he was in a few meetings, not in all, but those in which topics and... were prepared for our presidency, for the next half year. And that was remarkable because that was not so clear at the beginning...he should have worked in the Political section; the Political section said no thanks, there are too many difficult dossiers where we don't want another country to look into them,

because naturally the information he has here for his work he can share with his embassy... And so there was less of a problem for him to work here in this section.

...

There was some adaptations but I would say that in the way the work developed, this was always the section dealing with EU affairs and which learned in a certain way... although there was this change of culture from before membership and after accession. We had the outlook already of a country in the way to accession, so that was not too difficult. And also we had the right mix of people who had been there for a few years, who had written books about... we had people from the academia who had I would say various educational or research inputs into the EU as such, and had been contributing members to the closest thing that would exist in Austria to a think tank, taking part in conferences, etc. we had more of these people and they had more knowledge about the EU than the average among civil servants. We find we have fewer people now from the academia and people who...?

Q: Coming back to exchanges, do you know if you receive more than you send or vice versa?

A: That is a problem because over the last 2 years we haven't had that many exchanges, I would say after the Austrian presidency, for instance, but in our department there hasn't been any. It was discussed there and then, but there's always a climax during the presidency and in the 6 months period before the presidency, but in the 2-3 years after there's hardly any exchanges. At certain moment I think we don't even have a single person in our department as an exchange civil servant.

Entretien 14

MAE (DG II) 7 juillet 2009

Q : First of all, how long have you been in this current position?

A: I have been European correspondent for a year and a half. Previously I was deputy European correspondent dealing with tasks and questions which were attributed to the Austrian presidency, tasks which a European correspondent usually does not have. The normal tasks of a European correspondent is to prepare for the PSC, write the instructions, send them out to Brussels; secondly, to draft the Austrian position or to coordinate the Austrian position for the General Affairs Council and foreign affairs council ... all the foreign affairs points of those. And basically to work and feed the political director for both bilateral meetings and EU meetings he has. During an EU presidency, there are tasks a MS usually does not have and these tasks include of so-called third country meetings and preparing those at various levels. So if there are EU summits with the US, with Russia... those meetings are prepared by the European correspondent. ...

Deputy European correspondent from 2005 till early 2007; the small posting in OSCE and then Euro correspondent. Before 2005: various functions in BMEIA EU coordination, legal service, press information; 2 postings abroad: Italy, bilateral embassy, for EU questions, consular questions; then in Brussels at our small office at NATO, where we have, as a neutral country a small mission to PfP and EAPC.

Q: So I will start with these postings abroad. When you were in Rome, ... quid consultation with the other MS?

A: There were many informal contacts; our closest partners, wherever we are, whether in Thailand or in Ottawa, are our EU partners basically, so there were a lot of informal contacts with the other EU MS. There were also formally, once a month, before the General affairs council in Brussels, there are briefings by the MS. So, the ? in Rome, they give briefings to the other 26 – at the time we were fewer – but both on the General Affairs' side and on the Foreign Affairs' side. Right now, once a month, I do the same here for the other EU MS accredited in Vienna. Me and a colleague from the General Affairs' side, we give briefings ...? to the other MS. And there, the ambassadors are not coming but the deputy or the number 3 or 4 from the embassies and they basically take note of our preparations to the work.

Q: Ok. And as far as your posting in NATO is concerned, I would like to know...

A: ... Well, NATO is a very flexible organization. So there are core issues of NATO where only NATO members participate; primarily the North Atlantic Council meetings are behind closed doors, we didn't have access. However, NATO has opened up many of its meetings ... to troop contributing partners. ... So since Austria for instance participates in the Kosovo mission, KFOR, ... in the format "North Atlantic Council Plus" we could participate in the discussions on KFOR. So in that sense it was quite a flexible.... There are many formats... EU format also where we participated basically on the EU side. But even there obviously, our closest partners – our EU partners - at NATO gave us informally much of the information on what was going on in NATO.

Q: Ok. Communication with EU partners...

A: There are not formalized meetings of European correspondents. There used to be when the PoCo, the Political Committee, was still in place a couple of years ago; back then there were formal meetings of the Political directors in Brussels, so they would meet I believe once a month or even more often in the end and discuss EU foreign policy. Ever since the PSC has been in place, this process has shifted to Brussels and is now Brussels-driven. So each MS has a PSC ambassador in Brussels, they meet twice a week and we basically feed in the instructions and feed in the Austrian position through our representative there. There are still meetings of the political directors, capital's based, but they are informal meetings; they meet twice by year, at the beginning of each presidency, and they meet once a month for informal lunches at the margins of the General Affairs Council. European correspondents are usually there as note takers but we don't have formalized meetings.

Q: But do you know your counterparts quite well?

A: Yes I know them very well because there informal meetings; once a month we, at the General Affairs Council, we go with the Ministers' delegations to Brussels and there we, basically in the corridors, ~have a meeting at the salle d'écoute...

Q: And do you participate in these so-called Gymnich meetings?

A: That is correct... this is another, this is probably the most formalized function of a European Correspondent; during each presidency, in March and in September usually, there are informal ministerial meetings, informal in the sense that they do not take formal decisions, there is a list of issues they discuss but not a formal agenda. And there are basically no conclusions, nor decisions taken at these meetings; it's an informal format of discussion. In these meetings, it's usually the minister + 1 and that plus one is the European correspondent, who is in a so-called "salle d'écoute", taking notes of the meeting.

... The idea was originally to have normal meetings: the General Affairs Council... for operational purpose with decisions being taken at the end, and Gymnich meetings more for strategic purpose, with more fundamentals debates... where should we move, where are our relations with Russia, with the US, with China going. What has actually happened over the years is that it has become more and more like a normal General Affairs meeting, so the discussions are not as free-flowing as they used to be. Each of the ministers has basically briefing notes and speaking notes with him or her. The distinction with a General Affairs meeting has become blurred.

Q: because of enlargement?

A: That might be one reason. I believe it has more to do with the public attention, since there is much more media attention now on Gymnich meetings; so there's more pressure on the politicians when they come out of the meetings, to say what has been agreed or what was basically the consensus. And for that reason, the ministers want to prepare themselves better and the reflex, by the bureaucracy, in the 27 MS, is to prepare files as if it was a normal General Affairs Council.

Q: Ok, then since Gymnich meetings became more formal, is there "something else" that has replaced them, I mean sort of informal meetings; is there a need that is felt for informal and very confidential meetings?

A: Well, some people would say so, that there is now a lack, a gap of these informal preparation of the general work. What has basically filled that gap are, in my personal opinion, 2 things: 1) the work of the Council secretariat; Javier Solana's office, people around him who do a lot of the strategic thinking of where the EU is going; the Special Representatives...they do a lot of the ground work and make sort of policy recommendations of where things should go. But at the same time, there are also informal networks where, depending also on the conflict or on the crisis in the world, on the relationships with third countries, there are subgroups of MS who have a particular interest. So... and these subgroups can vary; so if you have for instance Mozambique, obviously Portugal as a small MS has an interest because it's their former colony... if you have Congo, a country like Belgium is very important. Concerning many of the other conflicts, you have these informal groupings: you have the near-east quartet, the Balkan contact group, the Minsk group for the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh...where a few MS, usually the large ones but not exclusively those, prepare decisions and take the lead... On Iran for instance, you have that with the E3 + 3, you might have heard of those, who basically think ahead and do the strategic groundwork...

Q: Ok. Does Austria participate in any informal grouping?

A: We did during the EU presidency and we participate on some issues where we have more of an interest than others; for instance on the Balkans, we basically try to influence the participants of these groups, like the contact group... and we liaise very closely with them. So when we know there is a PIC steering board in the Balkans for instance, we liaise very closely with them; we ask beforehand, you know, what are you going to discuss... after the meeting we ask them what was the outcome. We do that less so in regions where we have less of a foreign policy issue, uhh...interest.

Q: Concerning the COREU system...

A: It's basically one secure channel of communication between MS and institutions in Brussels that allows to communicate more or less in formal fashion. Now it's used for various things... The whole process of exchanging information has also become more and more Brussels based; our main source of information to know, to find out about what's the position of Ireland on the... and the position of Portugal on East Timor... we find out through the Brussels' channels: the working groups, the PSC. The COREU is used basically for: the EU special representatives to send out their formal reports once every 2-3 months; the EU presidency and the Council Secretariat send out their proposals, sometimes for language, for EU declarations, etc. ...

Q: How would you react if a MS acts without prior consultation...

A: Yes, well... I believe that happens rarely now. Because there is a high degree of solidarity between the MS that everybody is cautious to basically jump in and come out with a national position. So there is agreement among the 27 that in a first round you should try to reach agreement among the 27. If this is not possible, you can still have various positions and then also publicize them. For instance, on the recognition of Kosovo, there was not a unified EU position in the end; various MS recognized, few (I believe it's 5) did not, and each MS, in their speeches towards the press, the Parliament, etc. argued why they deemed this decision was correct. In those instances where you don't have common EU positions, there are MS having their own position and nobody prevents them from doing it. It happens, however, also sometimes, that EU positions are being supplemented by national positions. For instance, coup d'État in Honduras... it takes maybe one or 2 days to establish the final EU position through the COREU, etc. and during that period, in particular in the larger MS, some countries go to the press and make their own declaration... but usually that supplements, usually that's not in contradiction with the EU, but very much along the lines with the EU limbo.

Q: so the informal rule is to consult the others and inform them about your position...

A: Yes, I don't believe that, since each MS also has the possibility to draft the EU declaration or to be part of the draft of the declaration; nothing will come out of Brussels with which not all of the 27 can live. So in the end of the day, the national position and the EU position are not at loggerheads with each other; they might have a different focus, lay a different emphasis on certain things, since the Brussels' text is usually a compromise text of the 27, whereas the national position can be more edgy. But they should not be at loggerheads with one another.

Q: ... to "defend the Austrian position..."

A: Well, first of all, maybe "defend" is not the right word. It's common foreign and security policy, so since we are members of the EU, the EU's position is also our position... some national politicians in each of the MS, sometimes portray it as a dichotomy, as a difference between what's going on in Brussels and what's going on nationally. I personally don't believe that the 2 are at loggerheads. It is in our interest, particularly as a small or medium size MS,... the trust and the weight of our national position get enlarged by the EU. So, "defending" national positions might not be the right term. When it comes to forming a national position, which is then flowing, a bit being channelled into the Brussels' process, be it through COREU, the PSC, into the drafting of these compromise texts, when it comes to forming this position, it's a complex process. Which is both Brussels driven and capitals driven. What we get from Brussels is the information on where is the train going, what is the most likely outcome, how do others position themselves in working groups or at the PSC. And we use that information, primarily in order not to ? a position which is completely not in line with where the mainstream is going. However, concerning few... once in a while you have a position which is different than from the mainstream and these positions they basically come from your country; from the various constituencies, from Parliament, from various lobbying groups in your country...from the public opinion that might be different than in other MS, and that's basically ? through the various departments who know best and that formulate that position.

Q: Ok. ... how important since the EU membership for you to develop foreign policy on regions like Latin America...?

A: I learned from older colleagues that, before 1995, there were basically for us blank spots on this planet. You know, certain things were foreign policies priorities and other areas in the world, they were sort of followed through the papers and through our network of embassies but more loosely. Right now, we need to have a position since the EU is going to have a position, even on conflicts and developing countries which are far away, like in Honduras, like in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, 3 countries where we don't have an embassy, where very few Austrians live and where our foreign policy and trade interest is rather limited. But out of solidarity with others – Honduras= Spain, Sri Lanka= UK, for instance – out of that solidarity we need an Austrian position on these countries... there we mainly support the EU mainstream...maybe a little bit enrich it with principles of Austrian foreign policy: civilian crisis-management, human rights, those traditions which are dear to our foreign policy, we would basically ... into the text on Sri Lanka, on

Myanmar. But there are basically no blank spots on the map anymore, and our department, although it's very small, the Latin America's desk consists of 2 people here in our quarters – they need to have very quickly a grip on what's happening in Honduras, deliver up to date information on it and formulate an Austrian position. And that has changed I would say from before 1995 to now. So the pace has really increased, the pressure for the individual desk officer has increased, but also the world has evolved in a way that has made it easier for our desk officer to stitch together a position, to get quickly to information through the online networks, through the BBC world service, etc. And before 1995 obviously that was much more difficult.

Q: Ok. Within the ministry here, do you see differences of mentality between you and colleagues of your generation and older colleagues?

A: I would say most of, the older generation who was there before 1995, most of them have very quickly gotten used to the Brussels thinking; that things are Brussels driven, that the pace has really increased.... I think it's more that technological leap into the future which some of the diplomats of the older generation have not really fully grasped. They all need to work with the very modern computer system, emails, the Internet, etc. but they do it to varying degrees. Which doesn't necessarily mean that their diplomatic skills are less than that of the younger generation. And right now, I would believe we have quite the best of both worlds because the older generation is used to the old techniques of doing things, they have experience and they have a good eye for how to synthesize something, how to drop it down in a short telegram...have evolved with a mentality of being short, precise, synthesize. Whereas of some the younger ones, they have the tendency to send long long memos, which they cut and paste from various sources and to basically not come to the point. So having a mix of young people who collect up to date information, the latest news basically, and have the older people there with their experience... that combination is basically the best.

Q: And do you think the foreign ministry here devotes enough resources to its role in the EU?...

A: Well, if you ask any bureaucrat worldwide... the sky is the limit. There's always the dream of having 3 times as many people, 3 times as many resources and money... But each of us is also realistic enough to know that we have to work with the resources we have. I believe Rumsfeld(?) said once "we don't fight the war with the army we wish to have but with the one we have". And you know that's a fact of life. Considering we're a medium/small size MS... comparing ourselves with the Nordic countries, with a country like Norway, which has a similar size, of course we are envious. At the same time, considering the few resources we have, we are also fairly active, both in Brussels and right now during the Security Council membership in New York.

Q: Ok. Are there countries within the EU with which you have closer relationships?

A: Well, it really depends a little bit on the issue and what I need for my work. If I have a question on what's going to happen at the G8 summit next week, I am not going to call my Danish colleague or my German colleague or my British colleague; I am going to call my Italian colleague because the meeting is going to be in ... (Italy). If I work on another topic which is a foreign policy priority right now – Black sea and Danube cooperation – of course I liaise very closely with my Hungarian and my Romanian colleague. On many other issues, where we have basically not so much information, where we have the feeling that countries with larger foreign ministries have more resources and more knowledge, then we liaise with larger MS; we call up in Paris or in Berlin mainly.

Q: Speaking of larger MS, is it difficult sometimes to handle relationships with these states, who may tend to have a bigger role, etc.?

A: I would not say so. Because in a way, it's in their interest... There is an unwritten rule in Europe that basically phone calls from other MS they have priority; if I'm sitting here with you and I get a phone call from my Lisbon colleague I would probably interrupt this interview now and take that phone call because that has priority. So that's basically an unwritten rule. The larger MS they also have an interest in involving the smaller MS and keeping them up to date and informing them. My experience is, if you want to be active and ask questions on a particular issue, then they are quite happy to involve you and inform you. They might not give you all the documents, they might not be... but in an informal fashion, they might give you an assessment, because they also want to bring you, as a smaller MS, on their side and basically create a critical mass in Brussels, in particular if a topic is a little bit disputed.

Q: Ok. In the literature, it is often highlighted that CFSP is a sort of empty vessel... What is your point of view on that?

A: CFSP is 10 years old and I believe it's been quite a success story. If you look at the resources provided, I think they have also multiplied by 8 to 10 fold the money spent on missions. CFSP and ESDP missions, their number has increased, their effectiveness has increased... improved tremendously. The fine tuning of the other foreign policy instruments in CFSP has worked very well. For example, that network of EU special representatives, has improved the quality of the proposals, the influx of information we get... And

I would say, on most issues... it's fairly easy to agree among the 27 on issues like Honduras, Sri Lanka, Myanmar. And the message coming out of Brussels is important for these countries. And not least because the EU is such a global player in the economic arena, it is important for the government of Sri Lanka, how Brussels or the 27 are pronouncing themselves on what was happening a couple of months ago and whether they rather applauded for the way they eradicated the Tamul tigers or whether they ... That's very important for these countries. And it's even more important when it comes to passing measures which hurt; when it comes to sanctions for instance. Then, third countries they listen carefully.... that makes a difference if 3 EU countries take a position on something or whether a bloc of 27 take a decision on embargo, economic sanctions, etc.

Q: ok, so on many issues it's easy to have a converging view?

A: I would say on MOST issues, it's very very easy and very quick... the speed of converging these views has tremendously increased. Of course it's more sexy for the press to highlight those issues where there are divergent views, like for instance Kosovo. But I would argue that also within countries you might have diverging views...

Q: Ok. Concerning neutrality...

A: I believe the EU has gotten used to national peculiarities of certain MS... those not having the Euro, etc. ... and there are those MS who are not members of NATO and who therefore have a different policy outlook than countries which are in NATO. The EU has found a way to deal with national peculiarities... there's the mainstream, ... In the EU, our neutrality is not really a topic anymore because our Constitution made it clear that we fully participate... The problem arises more so in NATO and when it comes to missions where there are no Security Council decision. But many other countries have that problem too. So, we're in the EU, we're fully associated.... And in day to day working, the neutrality debate does not really play a role. As long as we are associated in the activities of CFSP and ESDP, that's not really a topic. And we are in the battle groups....apart from Afghanistan... (2-3 missions), we are member of all the EU missions.

Q: Do you think eventually Austria could accede to NATO?

A: Well, we would need a 2/3 majority in Parliament to change the legislation (at Constitution level) on neutrality. Some people even say you would need a referendum. I don't see the political will in the Parliament and in the population to change that right now and in the foreseeable future. A couple of years back, there was a certain debate "should we join..." but other things happened... and I think neutrality has basically become more important again for Austrians.

Q: But ESDP for the public, it's not a problem?

A: No it's not an issue. And even participation in NATO for peace missions is completely undisputed. Everybody recognizes that the stabilization of the Balkans is important...the KFOR mission is important...

Entretien 15

MAE (DG IV) 8 juillet 2009

Q: What was your role during Austria's accession negotiations?

(Was involved in EU accession negotiations...was in Brussels prior to accession

Was diplomat at the Austrian mission in Brussels at the time...)

A: ...Negotiations started with the easiest chapters, finishing with the more complicated ones, so the job changed according to what chapter it was... and the procedure is that there is a so-called acquis screening... in our case that was not so much because we were member of the Economic free trade area at the time so we had already taken over approximately 60% of EU legislation anyway. And the job was to find out the rest and to see under what conditions Austria would adapt its law to EU law; in most cases of course WE had to change our legislation and the real negotiations was all about in which areas do we get so-called transitional arrangements; so the permission to keep our legislation a little longer than the date of accession. And the most difficult chapter about that was transport where we got a 9 years transitional period and ... citizenship... So the negotiation really was about how much legislation we had to take over before the 1st of January, 1995 and what would sort of be adapted in the years after accession. Like the enlargement negotiations. And our job as diplomats was to be in a way the go-betweens, to explain to the specialised ministries in Vienna why we had to make certain changes at an earlier date and to convince them that this was a good thing, in the interest of accession. And also to sort of argue towards the Commission and the MS why it was very difficult for us to change to EU law completely. We were not a

particularly difficult candidate on anything except transit transport/traffic; it was much more difficult to negotiate with Norway and at the end of the day it failed.

Q: And what were your impressions about the openness of the other MS towards “welcoming” Austria in the EU?

A: They were all open, because there was already an enlargement process But of course different countries had different interest and different attitudes. Most difficult subjects were always with our neighbours, because that’s the most intense relations. In particular this question of transport was an issue with Germany and Italy... at the same time the Germans were those who supported us mostly in our efforts to enter rather quickly and finish the negotiations soon. The Germans at the time, and the Chancellor Kohl, were very interested in sort of being the protectors of the smaller countries and so on. Whereas the French... were not so keen on seeing this community become less francophone and francophile – which was going to be the case with this enlargement. The British were very supportive and helpful because they were interested in enlarging the market. And so that was good for them. Apart from the really big MS, there were not many difficulties coming from the smaller MS; they would mainly be “mainstream” on most of the subjects.

Q: Ok. And once Austria entered the EU, how was it for you to learn to operate in this new environment? How did you find this process of “adaptation” I guess?

A: Well, it’s a gradual process of course. You are not necessarily very skilful on day one. You have to get to learn all these different ~fora. I must say that from the moment when the negotiations were finished, that was in March, and we had a referendum already in June, which was positive. So, from June on, our people were allowed to sit as observers in various EU fora, including the Council, including even the European Council. And during these meetings we had the right to discuss, but not the right to vote. And that I think was a very good learning process. Because every Austrian who was involved- whether it was the Prime Minister, the chancellor or just ordinary *fonctionnaires* – had the opportunity to sit in the meetings, which was going to concern him as from the next year, and to get to know the procedures, get to know the people, get to know the way of operating, so I think that was quite a good training yeah. But between knowing what the rules are and how the game is being played, and actually using all these procedures in a skilful way, that is a long way, that takes years to actually know how to use different tricks, play tricks on the rules of procedures and so on, that takes more time. So it was a very gradual process.

Q:

A: As from the moment we entered, I was a so-called “Antici”– that is the name of an Italian diplomat who (first chaired) that group 20 years earlier, in the seventies – and this is a group of people who prepare Coreper II, so the Coreper of ambassadors. And I was in this group, sort of the right hand of the ambassador if you like, and I saw a wide variety of things – everything that went to Coreper, went to the Council, went to the European Council I saw. I did not systematically attend the other working groups; I would jump in if a colleague was on holiday, or ill, or something like that. But my group was only the Anici group which I attended, but which kept you busy all week actually, because it was sort of the level between working group and Coreper.

... Meetings of this group once a week, but sometimes more frequently.

Q: And what was the dynamic of these meetings...?

A: It was a very friendly dynamic. At the time we were only 15 members and it was still very much – both Coreper and the Antici group were very much a club of friends really, we knew each other very well and that helped us find us compromises and also say things which you wouldn’t normally say at a formal level: what kind of problems you had at home and so on. That then helped sort out possible solutions. I mean the Anticis do not normally device the compromises themselves, but then can pave the way and talk to each other and so on. It’s a rather informal thing which I think work very well. And it was a pleasant way of working, it was very cooperative, we knew each other very well, so that was a very positive atmosphere. I think it’s rare to have diplomatic fora which are so friendly.

Q: Ok. And for the Presidency of 1998... prepared to that in a systematic way?...

A: Yes, because there is a kind of Brussels machinery which starts – like 2 years ago, various people, in particular the Council Secretariat but also previous Presidencies, tell you what to do, what you have to prepare, they help you in the Commission, in the Parliament, and so on. So you kind of get a check list from others of what you have to prepare... we did that for 2 years and it was a fascinating experience because when you are in the chair, you see much more than you see otherwise, and you find out about the backgrounds a lot more. It was very stressful, but it was also very interesting. In 1998, it was not a “historic year” for the EU...so it was more a routine year for the presidency. In 2006 – I had to organize work v-a-v the European Parliament – and then we had more difficult files actually.

Q: Ok. In 2000...situation of Haider controversy... So you were in Brussels at that time. How did it affect you in your working relationships? How did you manage to cope with the situation?

A: Well, it did not really affect me personally. First of all, I had been in Brussels for 6 years and most of the people I worked with, or many of them actually, had become friends and they knew perfectly well that I was personally beyond any suspicion of sharing the political opinions of Mr Haider or anything like that, so I didn't have personal problems. The measures taken against Austria concerned higher levels – it meant that ministers, ambassadors, were not received and it was all bilateral. It did not really affect our work in Brussels at all, on the contrary; when for example... there was the occasional Commission official who would not receive people senior than me and ... Of course, there was a kind of unpleasant atmosphere in a way, at least in the beginning. Some people immediately came and said, we think this is a wrong decision, this is not going to make Mr Haider go away. Other countries reacted in a reserved way... even the meetings – they couldn't cut us out from meetings, but they would sort of be more reserved. But it did not really last very long. Because, in the first 2-3 months, Austria made very intensive efforts towards all the MS. The Commission, from the outset, said it does not share these measures because it thought we should wait and see what the gvt does and not act simply on the basis of announcements... - and the Commission stuck to this opinion and there were actually more and more MS who joined the Commission in this assessment. And it took on the whole, a bit over half a year to get rid of these so-called sanctions; they were decided in February and they were lifted in September. And it didn't take very long before Berlusconi came to power and there were discussions why the Austrians and not the Italians, and then others came and so on. ... I was personally not happy about this government (Austrian gvt of coalition) because we knew this was not going to be good for Austrian diplomacy. On the other hand, I really do think that the development showed this was not a good idea from the countries who had decided these sanctions, because they didn't really do anything negative to this FPÖ, on the contrary it made them more popular in Austria for a while. And I think there was kind of a learning process on the part of the 14, that they would not decide sanctions again, because they did not really produce the results envisaged.

Q: Ok. Comparing diplomacy before and after EU accession, what are the main changes...

A: It doesn't just change diplomacy, I mean it changes the whole gvt system, because ... contrary to the Germans for example, where the chancellor can give instructions to the ministers, under the Austrian Constitution, every minister has a responsibility for his own ministry, so he doesn't even have to tell the chancellor what he does. And it took quite some efforts for all these ministers to get used to talking to ministries in other MS, talking to the Commission, but also talking to each other, because sometimes you have files on the table which concern various ministries and there was always this tendency of not talking to each other and trying to pre-empt each other and so on, and so that was really a learning process, which is not even finished today but we have made some progress. As for diplomacy in the more narrow sense, humm... the first big result of course was that the EU accession widened our ? in a way. Because before that our diplomacy was focusing on areas most important to us – most of them of course in Europe and North America, and a lot less in Latin America, Asia and Africa, except maybe areas close to Europe. Because we just didn't have many interests there.... But when you're in the EU, different countries have different interests, there are colonial histories or whatever, so in the end of the day, you have to feel acquainted with diplomacy worldwide and... so that was quite a challenge to really deal with the wide variety of regional problems that you can have in the world. And still to sort of find one's way to, to put focus on certain things, to find out how, in the regions where you have very particular interests, you can make yourself heard among 15 more MS, which may have rather different interests, in particular if you are small. So this is an art of networking. And also, I think for a small country to make it clear, we are there, we work with you on all the different subjects, we are not going to interfere with many of them, but once we say this is very important for us, then please you have to take account of that. And that's the kind of position you have to con? for yourself.

Q: Current position: to what extent EU is relevant/important;

A: One section in this DG for Consular and Legal Affairs deals with IOs, among which the EU... I follow... (fields in third pillar...)... I'm the Austrian coordinator for the fight against human trafficking and there are EU legislation and projects related to that... So I still continue to follow that part of it. The last 7 years I spent mostly on negotiating the Lisbon treaty and it's quite useful to know what's in that treaty, what changes also regarding justice and home affairs, etc.).

Q: And in this current position, do you communicate with your European counterparts...?

A: Yes, not necessarily all of them but there are irregular meetings... it does happen that I meet some of them or all of them in various meetings. I travel quite a bit with regard to human trafficking; there are always EU countries there, but not all of them. I also go to OSCE meetings, to UN meetings, it depends on what is on the agenda.

Q: Are there MS with whom you have closer contacts..?

A: Well, it depends very much on what is at issue. Sometimes it's the Commission, sometimes a particular MS. There are always contacts with the EU presidency of course. I make a point always going to the country who will have the presidency the next half year. So I was in Sweden in May, I'll go to Spain some time in the autumn, to sort of get to know the presidency, find out about their projects, tell them about what's important to us so they know what to expect from us, things like that.

Q: Important to communicate with the presidency..?

A: Yes I think so. It is important to explain what our position is and to find out what their projects are, simply because sometimes there's a lack of knowledge about the conditions in a particular country and as long as you didn't find out about these backgrounds, it's very hard to find compromises at the European level. It's not enough in the meetings to say yes or no, you have to explain why it's yes and why it's no. And that's important for the Presidency to find out how they can find a compromise between all the different countries and interests.

Entretien 16

Austrian Institute for European and Security Policy (AIES, Maria Enzersdorf), 10 juillet 2009

Q: In a book by Gehler and Bischoff, it is written that Austrians had to practice an unconventional diplomacy in the 50's, 60's...? because... Does that seem accurate to you?

A: ... As you know, Austria was occupied for 10 years. And the first priority of Austria was to get the state treaty to get the withdrawal of foreign troops. In order to get that...first, we had quite a conflictual situation with Russia, especially with the Soviet occupying forces, and Austria did something, what I think was in fact the basis to the fact that Austria didn't become part of the influence zone of the Warsaw Pact. When the Marshall Plan was put on the table and then OECE was created around 1948, Austria was invited to join. And whereas the Russians and its "satellites" did not accept the invitation... Although Czechoslovakia, led by Benes, was not was not occupied by the Russians, they were a so-called allied country and had a strong Communist party... Benes was very anti-, let's say, Germanic...he gave in to the Russian pressures... so Czechoslovakia is the only Eastern country which became communist without any Russian troops on its territory... I think it was the wrong decision and the Czechs paid a high price for that. And the Austrian government, we were occupied...we had political leaders who were strong enough to say, no we are joining the Marshall Plan. And in fact the Russians wanted to prevent...but the allied statute was interpreted by us in a way that the Russians couldn't oppose. In fact the Austrians... according to the statute...if Austria would try to change its Constitution or enter into political treaties, then the allied had to approve by unanimity, which gave the Russians a veto. We argued successfully that neither the Constitution was not affected, nor was it a political agreement. And this position was backed by the Western occupying powers; the Russians didn't put a formal veto but there was quite some pressure on us, you can imagine. And in fact we twisted a little bit our Constitution, they didn't find out. This was a basic decision to assure that Austria would be politically, but not militarily, and economically part of Western Europe. ...Austria being part of the development of Western Europe in economic terms and also, to a certain extent, politically, as a democratic, pluralistic state was laid down by this decision to join the OECE and the Marshall Plan. One is not aware of that but I would say this is the crossroad. And I mentioned Czechoslovakia...

Q: You said that the relations with the Soviet Union were difficult...

A: Our relations with the Soviet Union were complicated, but we managed them better and better and then the Austrian government had the feeling that perhaps instead of being always in confrontation with them, let's talk to them. The chancellor said we shouldn't twist all the times the Russians...? And he said try to be nice to the ? and don't provoke them. And so we managed to talk, to have better relations with the Russians. And there were definitely a certain amount of confidence that was established on both sides. And as you know there was clearly...the Russians wanted to come to certain arrangements in Europe in the 1950's. And I would end of 1954-1955, there was a window of opportunity which the Austrian politicians ceased(?); there was a change of style with Krouchtchev and so on... Molotov continued to be against liberating, releasing Austria...letting us being completely part of the West and sign the treaty. But Krouchtchev said we should let the Austrians do it and we should accept the Austrian offer that we would not join NATO and declare neutrality. Neutrality was always seen that Austria would be part of the West – also Russia accepted it to a certain extent. What they would...and nobody in Austria had an interest in that... is they wouldn't accept of course if Austria would have tried to join NATO. And basically, Austrian neutrality was conceived with the basic idea not to, to prevent Austria to join NATO. So we

engaged in the so-called “Swiss model” of neutrality. And the... But, later on, after 1955, I mean neutrality is not legally part of the Austrian State treaty...neutrality was part of a political deal I would say, a political arrangement, but it was not...what was very much important for us is, we said, we declare our neutrality only once the allied forces, all the forces, have left Austria. So we didn't consider it as an imposed neutrality, or where any powers would guarantee it because this would give them a right of interference. According to our view, it's our own free will, and we never accepted any type of ? commitment; it's an internal Austrian law. We gave it the status of Constitutional Law but which we could change by Constitutional Law every time. Now what has happened, after that, of course neutrality served well Austria in the period of the Cold War...but the basis was already there in 1948 as I told you...which was the first step in the integration of Europe. ...

Q: Coming back in the 1960's, what was the position at the time about joining the European Community; joining NATO was ruled out, but what about the EC?

A: I think, in my opinion and based on the experience I had as a diplomat, to a certain extent, the success for Austrian diplomacy of becoming independent and the welfare which built up, created a situation that we were so much concentrated to build the thing that we lost contact, I mean the political class and the public opinion didn't really understand or was aware of the developments which took place in Europe. And I think there were so much concerns with our own problems and assuring to get in the UN and playing a role and so on...that we somehow missed the boat. Of course it was also difficult, because uh...the Russians tried always to establish, let's say in their political discourse, links between NATO and the European integration process. Which was I think a wrong point of view. And the Russians therefore always said, in fact they didn't want Austria to join; they had quite strong reservations. But on the other side, we have also a certain responsibility. As I said, after this tremendous effort which was done by the politicians, the diplomacy, etc. to become independent again... at least part of the Austrian political... didn't understand what Europe was doing. I mean the people which signed the state treaty, like Mr. Figl who was the Austrian foreign minister and even the socialist party, they were very European minded and they said we want to build a new Europe and become part of an integrated Europe. Which was also logical because Austria was never a national state; we were always a multinational state, from the monarchy already. And for us... But what is very interesting, an Austrian neo-nationalism developed after our independence. And it was helped also... (explains the fact that the national day was first supposed to be the 15th May, the date on which officials signed ? in the Belvedere, etc. but the Austrian politicians thought there were too many holidays in May, so they said let's do it in October. And it was decided by the Parliament that...the national day on the same day than the declaration of neutrality. And “somewhere a Russian or some allied jeep was left the borders, which nobody saw” (but this image of the Russian jeep left its mark despite its actual unimportance on the moment)). So suddenly we had a national day when nothing happened really for people you know. So in order to carry around the flag...they started to talk about Austrian neutrality and suddenly we got a stupid link I would say between neutrality and Austrian statehood and independence, which is wrong...it developed as a coincidence of wrong political decisions. And therefore today the public opinion somehow links independence, not with the efforts of the political class, which ended of May 15, but they think neutrality is everything. And they link also the welfare of the country... in fact the welfare is also the result of something else, of hard work. For me this is an understandable, nearly jokily I would say, situation, which causes us a lot of problems...who wants to make a strategic policy according to national interests?(pas sure) It's certainly a failure of the... I think, the political class was very good until we got the state treaty but afterwards somehow, things were well so we could afford second class politicians. And I know it because...there was a second reason... the People's Party was always more European and very pro-West and so on, and we were very much interested to get closer to the EC. But within the socialist party...because, you know, Austria had a very big state sector industry, which means syndicates...they were afraid that if we joined the EC they would loose influence of this important sector. Nationalization of industries in Austria: had been done to prevent the Americans or especially the Russians to take control of the Austrian industry. And in fact when we joined the Marshall Plan, the Russians gave up, more or less accepted our nationalization laws but the Russians didn't and created a huge Russian controled industry sector in their zone. So when we signed the state treaty with the Russians, we had to buy back our own industry. That was quite a substantial amount of money, but the prime minister said, we're not going to negotiate the price; I pay what they want, I do not want to have Russian control. That was a very clever position. ... Within the social-democratic party, a strong reservation developed against joining the EC because they said, we might then have to privatize; we'll lose influence and so on. So this was one element why... I would say there are 3 elements: 1) the people didn't realize what was going on; 2) the Left was afraid that it would loose control of state-owned industry, didn't want to be regulated from Brussels...; 3) and perhaps some people said, we shouldn't

provoke the Russians or something like this...not start a new conflict with them. This was the time when I took responsibility for the first time for the EEC; I was personally involved, I was in Brussels in the Austrian embassy and we split bilateral embassy and we created... as you know, there was an attempt to...they created around the EC the EFTA; I was personally never convinced of EFTA because I felt, the EFTA was not a real option for Austria. Austria is a continental country and all EFTA countries are maritime countries, except Switzerland, but the Swiss had a globalised economy because of their financial system...so for us it was the wrong decision. I was always rather sceptical, already at the time, on that. And also the politicians felt that EFTA was not a solution because our main market was the EC. So we started in the late 1950's to look more and more for bilateral contacts with the EC; we made a certain number of bilateral agreements with the EC countries, but we discovered this also was not a good thing, and more and more the feeling became important that Austria needed...I mean EFTA was not the real thing; we should at least try to agree on an association treaty, which would be negotiated. We negotiated that; I was the desk officer with the vice-chancellor Bock who was the minister of economy; diplomats were detached; the responsibility was not...let's say, because Mr. Kreisky, who was foreign minister, lost the elections; he was rather reluctant politically towards the EC; the competences were shifted to the economic ministry and some diplomats were detached to...I was one of them. I got the responsibility for these negotiations, as a young diplomat, I was about 40. I wrote a publication about that process (in the *Gazeta für Aussen Politische*, in the 70's I think... go to see if he has the article...). The basic concept was that Austria and the EEC would sign an association agreement, a little bit on the line of what the Greek did at the time. In the Austrian case we would create a customs union plus a number of harmonised policies, especially agriculture would be integrated fully in the market. But this customs union would be a *de facto* customs union; as you know the EC has a common tariff, legally. In our negotiations, we would have an EC tariff but it would be an Austrian tariff...agreement that we would move in the same directions, up and down, and we would, on the basis of regular consultations... So we would have a more independent position; for instance we would not delegate our negotiating power to the Commission, but we would move together... But our negotiations were quite far advanced and we ran into difficulties, for 3 reasons. Before I have to insist on one point, the EC has never accepted the concept of a free-trade area, for many years. And therefore the construction of our deal was based on a customs union and not a free-trade zone. First thing, suddenly there was a change of France's position; France was trying to bring Austria very close into the EC and suddenly France considers relations with Russia very important. The French told us there will be a worsening of our relations with Russia if Austria comes too close to the common market. They would have stood by us, but they were a little bit worried that perhaps the Austrian government was not strong enough to... And suddenly France gave Russia priority in its international relations. So it had an effect on our negotiations, at least on the progress. Then we had problems with Italy concerning South Tyrol. And also, suddenly Britain was asking for membership. So, all that brought about the situation that our negotiations, that our concept did not advance, our bilateral approach suddenly didn't go ahead. And it became clearer and clearer in the next year there might be a new solution between the EFTA countries and the EC, because a number of EFTA countries decided to apply to EC, especially Britain. And then, once some of the EFTA countries would join, then they would have to find a solution for those who would not join the EC. Austria was, I would say, the first one to try bilateral arrangements with the EC because of the political environment perhaps. It was also because the position of our government got weaker; the large coalition broke out...the People's Party got a huge majority and the Socialists went into opposition and so they gave up the support which for a few years they had given to the policy towards the EEC (they were then "playing the game", supporting the negos even though they had reservations). ... This was the internal side of it but I think basically the big problem was really, our negotiations lost a certain momentum and the as a result of the bombings in South Tyrol they were blocked for a certain amount of time, and meanwhile you had this shift of British policy and they were given priority.

Q: During the "Kreisky era" was it put really aside the idea of association or else with the EC?

A: no, Kreisky played along... Kreisky didn't give...I mean, as long as he was foreign minister... he supported the common policy but when he went into opposition he changed position; he was more reserved...perhaps because of its party... I mean he set other priorities: the UN system, the atomic energy commission...this is more important than to have...so Europe was not a priority for him. He was not very helpful let's say, if I'm elegant. But there was a shift in the social-democratic party even before the iron curtain fell, because Dr. Vranitsky became chancellor; he had another mentality, he was more European-minded let's say. ... And economically it became clearer and clearer that the EU became more and more important as an economic partner and he was a very economic male(?). And he was able to win over let's say the sceptics to the European cause. And of course the foreign minister at the time was Dr. Mock who was a very convinced European and my good friend Manfred Scheich was the head of the DG for

integration in the foreign office and they suddenly...they got through a formula before the iron curtain fell. In which Austria said for the first time we realize that this bilateral approach is difficult, therefore we should start considering the option of EU membership. And this was a political, very...I never would have dared myself...Manfreid Scheich was a very clever and good man and he got that into the ? and suddenly all we spoke about was the option and the rest was forgotten. So it was the second crossroad; the first crossroad was the OECD in 1948, then the missed date let's say in the late 1950's, then this certain period of isolation I would say, then suddenly a new opening in the late 1980's. And we applied for membership 3 months before the iron curtain fell...I think this is important to know. Manfred Scheich wrote a book about that...

Q: you mentioned the word "isolation"...

A: I consider that we were isolated yes. We didn't understand sufficiently what was going on in the rest of Europe. That's my personal assessment...but I think it's the correct one!

Q: During the CSCE conferences...mediation... did you experience this yourself?

A: I think...of course Austria, during Kreisky was involved in what they called the N + N group; this had some positive effect definitely, in the UN system. When we were negotiating the Helsinki process, I was in Geneva, and on my right was sitting the Belgian ambassador... and on my left the American ambassador. And it was very odd, I spent a lot of time talking to my American neighbour because the whole Helsinki process was in fact very successful actually because of the EC. They were the ones who were moving the process forward...the ones who were the most important players and successful player; nobody realizes it because the Americans didn't believe in Helsinki so they didn't have a plan. So they played the game but thought nothing will come out of it. And the EC in fact was taking the lead and since they had to negotiate common positions (among the EC members) and proposals there were always interruptions... we started late because they had to agree...everybody was waiting for proposals from them. And of course the N+N group played a certain role, but not in the OSCE process... We helped a lot but we supported mainly the...we helped let's say, to the negotiation in main issues, like human rights, to support the EC position...We took quite on some initiatives on human rights principles, we had good negotiators in this area. But the political leadership was with the EC. Which probably also helped...was also a good experience for us to see a European actor, which is acting independently of Washington, not getting instructions from Washington, at least on this issue. ...

Q: Okay. What was the importance of international law...you worked in the law division in the foreign ministry...

A: I would say, first the Austrians are always strong believers in law; they are very legalistic. In that sense we are very continental Europeans. ... Today the whole integration process would be better without Britain (because they're more atlantic; doesn't believe in the political project; there are basic differences like their different legal tradition). For us, Austrians, of course international law is something important. International law is imperfect because you cannot use force to apply it like in internal law, but still there's a system of international norms one should respect and we should strengthen it... Confidence can only be created by a functioning rule of law of work. ...we do not believe power politics is what we need. For me, I'm in favour of European integration because I think that the nation-state has destroyed Europe with excessive nationalism... the basic Austrian thinking was not a nationalistic approach...it was more believing in a federal approach to things and autonomy. The Habsburg empire was not very centralised...was very complex but it worked for centuries. It was overcome by the modern national state. But I don't believe this is really what will bring forward, national, in the long run...because...especially in Europe, no national European state has the power to defend its real interests on its own. We must join, pool sovereignties, in order to exercise better a common sovereignty.

Q: One last point which is very important actually: your involvement in the negotiations of accession of Austria to the EC. How did it go from your point of view? What were the difficult issues and how did you manage to get solutions...?

A: There was a certain suspicion at the beginning, on the EU side, that Austria would use its neutrality as an argument to prevent the development of the CFSP. And in fact we had to do some convincing work and we told them...in fact the situation is that we made clear the Austrian status would not be an impediment to develop a genuine European autonomous economic(?), let's say foreign policy and security policy. And in fact we amended our Constitution; the so-called article 26f). Which means that for instance if the EU undertakes a military mission somewhere and there's a decision by the European Council, Austria could take part in it without even a UN mandate. So we have given much more powers than for instance the Finns have done. The Finns and the Swedes always want a UN mandate. We would be able to act in an EU mission only on the basis of a mandate of the EU. At least the Austrian Constitution allows it. And so we have no legal problem on this; it's perhaps, for political reasons, it might be wise, for better

international legitimacy, to try to get a UN mandate. But for us, it's not a Constitutional requirement. So in my opinion we have created for us quite a substantial room of manoeuvre. Of course now pacifist movement exist in parts of Europe and in the Austrian society. And during the Convention (on Europe...) we supported very strongly the idea of a defence Union; we supported this German-French, Villepin and Fisher's proposal. At the moment there are, I'd say, there's perhaps not enough awareness ("by the public opinion, but I think in the political class it's there) what this implies; by building Austrian capabilities. What we are more concerned about is that the EU has made the enlargement process a sort of self-fulfilling activity and is not taking care sufficiently of its own interest and of its MS...

Q: Change of interpretation of neutrality throughout the accession process?

A: No we were always...I mean .. in fact I think for many years Austria supported strongly the development of a stronger Europe

...

When we negotiated our membership, we had a Commissioner negotiated with us and we had a very clear situation where the Union members were defending the acquis and they were defending their interests, and we had just to have real negotiations...hard ones uh. I think in the enlargement process, somehow people felt the larger the Union gets...they lost homogeneity and cohesion, social and economic cohesion. One should have, one has to address the...I mean one had to help these countries to come in but I'm not convinced that it was done in a...there was a lot of activism by the political leadership of the Union. Suddenly enlargement became an end in itself and one lost that the mission of the Union was to work in the interest of the existing membership and defend our interests in the globalization process. ...

About the Eastern enlargement (2004-7): I think the negotiations were not perfectly done. What we remark now is that even if they might have accepted now let's the hardware of treaties, the software is not there yet; they don't understand what everything is about, what we want to achieve politically. They consider too much the economic advantages and enough the political reasons why we do that, what I call the software of European integration. And this causes problems between the old and the new membership. So what we need now, and of course you have also different interests between countries net payers and those... the reason why we make efforts for our neighbours is to build a political project, like in a national state. ...The Union is already in a sort of over-extension.

Q: What was the impact of Austria's integration on the diplomatic practices' level? What did Austria's membership change on that level? (even though you retired in 1996...)

A: Of course you know, I was a year as ambassador on the field, in Brussels...In the field of foreign policy, my position changed; until Austria became a member – I was bilateral ambassador to Belgium – and if there was let's say an important visit or contact between Belgium and let's say the US and they were negotiating, well of course as a bilateral ambassador one task is to find out what's going on and how to affects your interests. As long as you were not in the EU, you had to find a date with the political director or one of his co-operator to get an appointment or perhaps once or twice you could call him. But you had to make an effort and sometimes it was rather complicated, because everybody has meetings and so on...so we had to wait some time. So you didn't have the same access to information and you were not involved in a consultation process. You had a bilateral relationship and you were able...we had very good personal relations but you had to make quite an effort to establish personal relationships and everything...the better you did it... The day we became member of the EU, we were involved in European correspondence, the European system of information and even to a certain extent of consultation in foreign policy matters... In some way you had too much information! And one thing important was through this correspondence, I learned that, for instance, the Austrian political director or some Austrian minister had in Vienna contacts with I don't know a Russian or a Canadian! And the content they were discussing I got through this channel, in Belgium, on my desk! Very quickly. Much better than I would have been informed by my own foreign office. Very often they did not even think of telling me because they thought it was not important that someone in Brussels knows that. ... so at first necessarily, not everything is on the ambassadorial level...so the ambassadors, it's easier their lives. And you're involved in a functioning networking process. So, one is not aware of that, but this is a very important...one sees difficulties outside but there is a very good functioning political, permanent consultation process going on. So I think this is already a change. ... It changes technically a lot of things. It's a different quality of foreign policy cooperation you have within the EU, using modern means of communication and so on. ... What I personally feel is, in my opinion, the EU still, the European institutions, uh...let's say, EU foreign policy is still too much reactive. It's not a strategic approach. What I would like... The EU has become important as a player, in my opinion perhaps too much...

... For Austria to join the EU was, gave us, involved us in a lot of things we were not involved before. I mean, we were suddenly faced with global affairs to an extent we were faced not before. In fact we could have a little say in debates...we had certain advantages in the economic field... We used our good, let's say, relations we had already established before, during the communist rule, to... we knew a little bit the environment and the people and so on. But in my opinion it didn't, it was not reflected this economic engagement really by having a strong political influence. Because this was somewhat disconnected, it was the result of private initiatives, not the result of a planned Austrian initiative. And I mean, we have a problem now with public opinion, euroscepticism is growing... but we are not alone. ... we shouldn't talk about "enlargement" but about uniting Europe; this was the original concept, we want to unite things which were together. "Enlargement Commissioner": this is a non-sense!

Entretien 17

Académie diplomatique (Vienne) 13 juillet

Q : in the 1970's...

A : Well, Austria of course, at that time, still abided very strictly to neutrality. In our understanding, neutrality was that we sought a role of mediating between East and West, which meant that many conferences in international relations... began to have their headquarters in Vienna. And in many international conferences, we were in what was called the "N+N group", which was the neutral and non-aligned group; for example the CSCE...

So it very heavily influenced our foreign policy of course, because we shied away from everything that sounded too close to one of the military alliances or to the European Community. It changed gradually in the 1980's; until I would say, at least well into the 1980's, mid-1980's, we were very strict with this neutrality policy.

Q:

A:...we were less bounded by memberships in alliances... and Austria, like Finns or Australians, were very much used as mediators in an organized way...

Q: How were your relationships with the EC member states in the 1970's and 1980's?

A: Well in the early 1970's it played no role because there was no European Political Cooperation, there were no real attempts to have a Common foreign policy of the EC members... and then we aligned ourselves more and more to the main common objectives of the EC policy, but it was not very formalised. But later in the mid-1980's or so, it became quite clear that more and more EC countries would group together, have a common position; it became more and more difficult for those who were outside to play a role. And I remember when I was in Strasbourg, which was from 1992 till 1996, at the beginning I noticed very much, especially during our presidency – we had the chairmanship in 1993 – that you were not an insider if you did not belong, so you had to wait until the EC members had agreed on something and then there was no way you could change that. So it became evident at the beginning of the 1990's that you were not a major player (in foreign policy) if you were not inside.

Q: Before the EU accession, was it usual, in your bilateral postings to consult EC MS?

A: of course, we always did that. But apart from the N + N group, which was a more formalized grouping, there were what we called the like-minded, a very loose group of medium-size countries, which had similar interests in foreign policy and that included also EC members, like for example Denmark. Other states in this group: Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Switzerland, the Benelux countries. And until late in the 1980's or mid-1980's it was not really a problem because the EC did not appear as a bloc. There was no common foreign policy. ... But then when we became member in 1995, then we realized how much we had missed. Suddenly we were inside. Already in 1994, 1993, we were practically associated in foreign policy matters. But it became very very difficult, to the extent that European integration became stronger, especially in foreign policy, it is evident that those who were outside had a big disadvantage. I know from my Swiss colleague – that's hardly a thing he would say publicly I suppose, but that's how they feel because they just don't really know what's going on.

Q: importance of international law in Austrian foreign policy?

A: Due to maybe the legal tradition in Austria, which dates back to the positivist school with Hans Kelsen, law always played an extremely important role in our foreign relations. And the first important legal adviser after 1955, who had been part of the delegation to negotiate the state treaty, ? who then became foreign minister and then made 2 terms as president... He was almost as important as the foreign minister himself because the international law department would say you can do this, you can do that, you have to do this that or that way...so the legal office, at least until we joined the Union, then there was a significant

shift a little bit...but it has always been extremely important to the extent that it went far beyond the legal adviser position. ... It's one of the biggest departments in the ministry and it has always played an extremely important role.

Q: still today?

A: still but today it's a little different, because today you have the legal advisers in the EU and you try to consult each other in order to have common positions... but it's still very important.

Q: During the accession process...

A: 2 observations. 1) In 1988-89 there was a big debate in Austria about what membership in the EU would mean for Austria's status of neutrality. It was one of the biggest debates of all. We had a grand coalition, like we have now, and there were different views among the parties and I remember in 1989 the Russians (USSR) protested against Austria becoming an EU MS and it was the legal office which handled all these questions: what it would mean for our neutrality when we join the Union. Second observation, of all the big issues, agriculture; the high degree still at that time of state-owned companies and our economic independence in times of war and crisis, were the big issues. And at least in the last one, it was the legal office which gave advice on what it would mean for Austria's freedom of action. So this was one part. And I left in 1992 so I was still in Vienna at the legal office in this first period of the decision to apply for membership and then the first year of following-up. The second part is that we all, of course, Austrian diplomat abroad and in Vienna, tried to convey the message that Austria is ready, fulfils all the requirements, Austria is willing to assume any responsibilities when it comes in. Plus, one very practical thing, in Strasbourg as you know there's the European Parliament, and beginning in 1993 or so, Austria We had an observer status in the EP and I met all these people...

Q: According to you, why did Austria decide to apply for membership in 1989 and not before; why at this precise time?

A: Well, after 1955 and then in the 1960's, 1970's, the consensual doctrine in Austria – and this was a consensus among all the parties – was that Austria could not become member of the European Communities, because .. was incompatible with ... nobody doubted that, it was a very firm, clear principle of foreign relations. Now in the 1980's, I can't remember exactly when it was, a section of the Austrian economy started to put this doctrine into question. We still upheld at the legal office, because we were the guardians of Austrian neutrality, the view that we cannot become a member of the EC because it's incompatible with our neutrality. Now in mid-1980's or so the Austrian Chamber of commerce asked two eminent law professors to write a legal opinion on the compatibility of Austrian membership of the EC with all our international obligations, including neutrality. And this was the famous ... (nom à retracer) legal opinion, which really changed the ball game; it was a new ball game after that. Suddenly, people were saying well, maybe if we take certain precautions, if we declare this or that, maybe we could arrive at the opinion that our membership is compatible. We all knew that it was very much necessary for the Austrian economy, to be not discriminated against, especially in our relations with Germany, that we would really have disadvantages not being member of the EC. Since the 1960's we had an association agreement with the EC, but this left out, for example, agriculture. So suddenly in the mid-1980's, maybe 86-87, there was a change of opinion in political circles in Vienna, saying well, after all, maybe neutrality is compatible with EC membership. Then in 88-89, there was a big debate, when applying, do we make a reservation? But then it became quite clear that the EU/EC would not accept any reservations. So we started to write legal opinions that it would not change our neutrality status...we could still be member...(?) Today, we have absolutely no problem with our neutrality.

Q: But do you feel that between 1989 and 1994 you have been pressured by the Commission and the EC MS to change your position on neutrality?

A: Yes, "pressured" might not be the right word, but it was quite clear that the EC would only accept us as a full fledged member, meaning that we assume any responsibility that comes with it, including the Common foreign and security policy; that neutrality would not be an excuse. And the big, I think – from my point of view, I mean this is living history – the big change in our thinking came in 1990. It had to do with the first Gulf war. Because suddenly in 1990... it was quite clear that Austria would have to really find its position as a neutral country in the context of the United Nations; we were member of the Security Council in 1991-1992 and we redefined and rewrote our legal doctrine about neutrality, saying that whenever there's an internationally agreed military action, being either by the UN – at that time we said only by the UN – or later also by the EU, that this is not a war in the sense of neutrality law and therefore neutrality does not apply (~20min). So we really redefined our neutrality; it's exactly the time from 1989 to 1995, when we became member, that this redefinition was done. As I said, until 1992 I was in the legal office, afterwards in the CoE, which also...the CoE had always played a major role for Austrian foreign policy because it made participation in European integration...; to the extent that we could not participate

in the EC, we were still in the CoE and therefore interested in an exchange... discussions in security matters; to the extent that we got closer to the EU, we got further away from the CoE, which is today not so important anymore.

Q: In the CoE, what were your impressions of the reactions of your counterparts from the EC MS about Austria's willingness to adhere to the EC?

A: I think everybody said, I mean if not Austria, Sweden and Finland, who else? We were ready, we were already integrated economically, politically...institutions, everything... I never met any doubts. With the exception that there were always some doubts, especially on the part of the big ones, except Germany, especially the Brits and the French; would Austria not use its neutrality as an excuse to stay outside. The scepticism, about the Austrian position and the Austrian status, was always because of the United States. But not because of the EU membership. Your first question showed me that it's typically the American attitude, that it's NATO. I mean NATO plays much less a role in Europe than it plays in the US. With maybe the exception of the UK.

Q: Well I was asking the question about NATO because it's really a centerpiece of the security architecture in Europe, it's really an important...

A: Not anymore, it shifted. I mean, of course, NATO is today a different animal than it was 10 years ago. But in Europe, the debate was more, when we talk about security architecture, about the EU. And its relations of course with NATO. But it was not a big debate. With the exception that, from time to time, politicians in Austria propose that we should become member of NATO, but that's over ... it was with Schüssel in 2001 but afterwards...nobody talks about membership in NATO; nobody has an interest in discussing this issue.

Q: And neutrality today...?

A: Neutrality is still very much an issue, but it's more a god feeling than anything else. I'll tell you, what people think neutrality is, is not what we do with neutrality. They say... for them – I'm exaggerating a little bit – neutrality means we take only good things and we don't do any of the bad things, you know, "let us not get involved"... in a way that is very vague. For example, our ? ... Suddenly neutrality became a big issue.... In the debate about the Lisbon treaty, about solidarity between ourselves (EU MS), suddenly neutrality became an issue. Again, in general, with the Lisbon treaty... started to behave like they had to defend neutrality, but in reality if you look at it closely, if you are a more informed, educated citizen, you probably know that neutrality is to a certain extent...it's still in our Constitution, but what's the content of it, good question. It means we don't participate in wars; we would not anyway. So...good example with 1999, the NATO attacks against Serbia; this where clearly where Austria applied neutrality law. With... Iraq, Austria strictly applied neutrality law. But it's not, there was not a big issue. You can still win or lose elections with neutrality; it's a very emotional, symbolic, you know... neutrality has become a symbol for the success of Austria after the Second World War. People identified that, today we're a well organized, fairly prosperous country, with our neutrality. Without knowing exactly why or what neutrality means.

Q: You mentioned earlier that when you were in the CoE, you realised that...what I understood is that there was kind of a bloc...

A: definitely, it was very unpleasant. I remember, I mean it was really a choc for me, because Austria, after so many years of complaisant, you know, international position...everybody loved us, we thought. Suddenly I became aware that we could not act as we wanted. I'll give you one concrete example; in 2003, as I said we had the chairmanship of the council of ministers of the CoE, and we convened the first ever heads of state and gvt summit in Vienna in 1993. It was a big thing; I mean there was the question of enlargement of the CoE, of Russia becoming a member, of all the Eastern European countries becoming members. And suddenly... it was the job of the chairmanship to draft the declaration to be adopted by the ministers... and I realized that there was nothing to negotiate about really. You waited until the EU members had agreed on something and then they would give you a paper and that's it. Because there were 12 of them, it was difficult to change anything because any change would have meant that they had to caucus again and it was terrible! In the end it was very frustrating because it was the EU as a bloc telling you what to do! And you were not invited even as the chairman – you were responsible for the whole thing but you were not invited to participate in their debates. You just waited so to speak outside, at the door, until they told you what they had agreed upon. That's I mean a little exaggerated, but that's the way that European consultation functions.

Q: So when Austria became an EU member, from one day to the other you were accepted in...?

A: Well, not from one day to the other, because during the negotiations we were more and more included into the negotiations. And it's a rule – I don't know if it's written or if it's customary – that once you have concluded the negotiations you are allowed to participate in Committees and...

Q: And how did you experience the beginning of the EU membership, in your working practices?

A: It was very exciting, very exciting. Because suddenly you were part of a bigger group and you had to learn, all of us had to learn, what it meant. It meant that there were limits to what you could get through, limits to defending our own interests, because you always have to think about the bigger whole(?). Suddenly we were sitting in I don't know, 20 or 30 working groups, in foreign policy working groups: on the Middle East, on Africa, Asia, UN, etc. and it was a totally different working style, totally different working style. I remember also the famous COREU system, I don't know if you know the COREU system... at the beginning this was like a wholly mess! You know, when we were receiving a COREU, my God! We were part of the communia. I remember when I wrote my first COREU, this was like composing I don't know, a poem!

Q: How did you learn to use the COREU system...?

A: On the job, I mean you just read the other COREUs and at the beginning you don't do very many, you keep quiet. I don't know if you remember what Chirac said to the Poles, when they started to speak out right at the beginning, he said "You Poles, you missed an opportunity to shut up!" Because at the beginning mean, just be there, listen and learn! And you know, slowly, you became really part of it. There are no rules for that, you just... - probably it depends a little bit on your personality, some are more... But it really was a change in the way that you were working.

Q: And for the first presidency in 1998, how did you prepare for that you and your colleagues?

A: You know, that is a very good question. I'm looking back and... here at the Academy now we're offering training courses and in 2006 we offered training courses to young diplomats. We didn't have training courses in 1998! It came with the job! At that time in 1998, I had been back, and I was head of the Americas department. So suddenly I found myself, together with my colleagues in my department, responsible for transatlantic relations and relations between EU and Latin America. Which meant I was the Chairman of the so called task force in transatlantic relations, which meant that I think I went 20 times to Washington and to Ottawa. Suddenly, you were thrown into the cold waters, you just did it! There was no big learning process really.

Q: And especially since Latin America was not an area where Austria traditionally had not had much interest...

A: that's the big difference with membership in the EU! Maybe with the exception of fisheries, which is really of no interest for Austria, in our first presidency we had asked to Sweden and Finland maybe, I don't remember, to take care of fisheries. But other than that, as a presidency you have to deal with everything. What at that time helped a lot, was that the state secretary at that time – she had the same position as I had 10 years later – Benita Ferrero-Waldner, was extremely interested in Latin America, so I accompanied her on numerous trips to Latin America. So I had met people in... So that was fairly easy. What at that time was still a very good school for learning was the troika, the old troika, meaning the previous presidency, the current and the subsequent... so the Brits were before us and of course, as part of the troika, you learn already and when you come in... it goes rather smoothly. But so Latin America was a ? to a certain extent. And during our presidency in 2006 we had a big Latin America summit in Vienna and it was a big success. So that's you learn, I mean the world becomes smaller! Because you cannot say, Africa doesn't interest me, or Asia who cares. But you are part of it when you're in the EU! And you also profit from the Commission's experience, or other countries' experience or the Council secretariat, etc. It's a totally different ball game really. The content of foreign policy as a member of the EU is quite different. But, you must never forget that this also means solidarity. This is also a question of solidarity. Okay, the others are here for you, but you're here for them also. This is why, to be honest, now it comes to my mind, I don't understand the Slovenian position when it comes to Croatia. I mean this is a lack of solidarity.

Q: ...What was your impression about your colleagues' feeling about the need to integrate the CFSP framework; was it felt as less room for manoeuvre?

A: on the contrary. I mean, to a very small extent you have less room for maneuver. On the other hand, you are part of the decision-making process in foreign policy in the EU, which as a small country, when you are outside... I know it from my Swiss colleague, I mean they suffer a lot. All diplomats that I know in Switzerland would prefer to be a member of the EU. So in the beginning, it meant, that was a new experience for all of us, it meant that at least once a month, sometimes more often, you would go to Brussels to one of the working groups, to the CFSP working groups. So you know, this was something new, you were suddenly part of the whole machinery.

Q: And these working groups you were going to, did you find that the dynamic was different than what you knew?

A: Definitely. In a very positive sense. I mean, I've been to so many international conferences... the ceremonial part of it takes so much time and effort. In EU, it's like that: you don't even say, I don't know, the usual nice things at the beginning... you go up to the point, you don't speak endlessly, you just say the position of Austria is like this and that's it. And then it's up to the chairman – that's part of the game – the chairman has to try, with the different positions, to try to come up with some sort of a solution. And everybody is looking for it, for a compromise. The work in multilateral fora is something that is very very cumbersome and very complicated and slow and frustrating. The EU it's much more, you know, solution-oriented. And you know, people talk differently in these working groups.

Q: You mean they're more direct?

A: It's more direct and you don't play the game, you know the typical foreign policy game of preaching peace and motherhood all the time... again I'm exaggerating a little bit but... you know, in international conferences you praise everyone... In the EU, you have items on the agenda, and you say our position to that agenda item is the following. And you say usually maybe 1 or 10 sentences and that's it. Because it's a lot of time, you have one day and you try to get the job done as soon as possible. It's really different. In the meantime, also in international organizations, including in the UN, I find, at least in the Committees, work has become less formalised than it used to be. What you don't have... in international relations, at least in the general debate, you have these endless statements which people read. Nobody really listens because you can read it afterwards. I've never seen any of my colleagues in the working groups reading a statement, you speak, you discuss, you really discuss, and you listen and then you might say, "I don't think that my colleague from Sweden is right, because...". You really discuss! And you almost speak to each other directly.

Q: And are informal discussions still important even though you speak to each other quite directly?

A: We always have that. Usually more work was done in the informal discussions. But in the EU it's a little different, because of course the state secretaries (?) participate in numerous formal Council meetings, be it Council for foreign ministers or any other Council formations. And there it's the same informal setting and the same informal way of doing business. Informal in the sense – of course it's formal... – but first of all, in the Council of ministers for example, it's on first name basis, you don't say "and I'll give the floor to the distinguished representative of France" but you say "Jacques" and then "thank you" and you talk to the point. You might not agree always, there's some heated debate sometimes. Probably more heated than in a more formal setting of the General Assembly of the UN. But it is still the same way of doing business in the Council meetings. And that goes from the Council of the heads of state down to the smallest working groups. And don't forget... we had, if I now remember correctly, I think we chaired in our presidency in 2006 3000 meetings in 6 months and it has become more since then. It's quite a lot. I just saw a statistic; it was on the homepage of the Czech Republic presidency, how many meetings they had chaired... I think it's more than 5000 maybe... It's incredible. For example, I gave 61 speeches in the plenary of the European Parliament in 6 months. So you know, the work method, the work rhythm is much different. We were used to okay, the mission at the UN asking for instructions, unless they said it's in 2 hours, you usually had the time to think... With the COREU, when the presidency sends out a COREU and says ? tomorrow 2 o'clock, if you don't answer by then, you are supposed to have agreed. And this happens, I don't know, 20 times a day. So the whole work rhythm is very different than what we were used to before. Interestingly enough – one would have to write about this, maybe it's an interesting subject - would this rhythm, this speed of decision-making have been possible without emails? Without modern communications. I don't think so. COREU itself is sort of an email... the heading and the end it's standardized, in the middle it's like an email and it's sent by protected email...

Q: Overall, would you say the Austrian ministry adapted well to the EU?

A: Yes, yes definitely (prompt and convinced answer).

Q: And in terms of resources devoted to the EU, money, staff...?

A: I don't have the figures but I think it's a clear shift towards European affairs. No I shouldn't say European affairs, but... matters handled in a European way ... with a focus on CFSP. I remember when I entered the foreign service until well into the 1970's or 1980's, we had about 2/3 of our people abroad and the rest in Vienna. Now we have slightly more people in Vienna than we have abroad. We have slimmed down our bilateral embassies and we have very much shifted towards handling European, the European way of doing things. Not only our Brussels mission, but also if you look in Vienna, most of the political department and most of the so-called economic integration department have their lead office in European matters. In the sense that whatever they do has to be seen in a European context.

Q: exchanges of diplomats...?

A: yes, during our last presidency we had at least a dozen from many MS, probably most MS.

Q: So this is mostly during the presidencies?

A: yes. We have a few now...I don't know exactly because I'm out of the ministry, but during the presidencies we had many. We are sending people too during presidencies of others; I think it's one or two during the various presidencies.

Q: ... diplomatic academy...

A: Can I just interrupt, because one thing, I don't know of it will appear in what you're writing, but I mean the biggest challenge and the most exciting perspective right now is of course the External Action Service; we call it the European diplomatic service, which is in the Lisbon treaty. And that's of course the most exciting... still very vague perspective of Europe and its diplomacy...you will have European diplomats, not just the Commission representatives dealing with questions about the competence of the Commission but in all, including the second pillar matters, that now are in the hands of the MS foreign ministries, will become part of the EEAS. That's a very... that's probably a subject of its own to write about. But this is the most exciting. And that leads me to the diplomatic academy, because of course the academy wants to be part of the training of such European diplomats.

Q: So how do you prepare your students for that?

A: Good question, we're working on that! Quite a lot of special courses to train young diplomats or students in European affairs. Right now, for example, we have a Eastern European special course for 16 Eastern European young diplomats, especially in EU matters. We have a group of 15 Russians here, which will be trained in negotiation techniques and also European affairs. So we are training young professionals who are already in the service and those who come from non-member countries, in special skills. ... Also courses for Austrian diplomats + officials: language training, how to conduct a meeting, negotiation techniques, etc. ... European questions and matters are also part of the curriculum of normal courses. And here I have a little different view than my predecessor and I have already begun this year to have more emphasis on European matters. So I shifted a little bit the emphasis to European affairs, as part of programs of masters for example.

Q: Do you know the percentage approximatively of Austrian diplomats who studied here at the Diplomatic Academy?

A: In the last 10 years or so it's about 50%. ... Most of diplomats did at least one post-graduate.

Entretien 18

Vienne, 13 juillet

Beginning of the interview unrecorded ; talked about his role in the UN Committee for the peaceful use of outer space... Austrians chaired that committee, mediating between US and USSR.

...

A: ... my approach is a legal one; I was a legal adviser in the foreign ministry...

Q: What was the importance of international law for the foreign ministry in the 70's, 80's?

A: Well, one of the main points in our foreign policy posture was the fact that Austria, as a neutral country, for a long time was considered not able to join the European Union as a full member. Legal experts at that time took the view that a neutral country could not become member of the EU, because the commitments deriving from the EU treaties were incompatible with legal obligations deriving from the status of permanent neutrality. This was one problem. And also from a legal point of view, we had to face the critique of the Soviet Union which formally opposed Austrian membership of the EC in view of the neutrality issue. Austrian neutrality was incompatible with joining the EU. So as the legal experts, we could not ignore this point. We had to develop a strategy which made the goal of membership compatible with neutrality. So when I was the legal adviser... Austria joined in 1995, but the negotiations started much earlier...letter of application in 1989. This was at a time when the USSR was already in a bad shape and it became clear that Moscow would not longer oppose Austrian membership to the EU and that the obstacle of Russian opposition would recede. At the same time, in the Austrian government, there was an agreement between the two major parties in favor of membership. This was new because previously the socialist party took a rather reluctant stance regarding membership. Only step by step, gradually, they became convinced that membership was the only viable option for Austria. And all that happens at the end of the 1980's, beginning of the 1990's, when actually the legal experts had to redefine Austrian neutrality in order to make it compatible with the goal of membership in the EU. ...

At that time (92-93), this was new, we opened a new unit in the department, in charge of EU affairs, which had to provide a legal expertise for the membership negotiations, which started really

Q: Would you say the legal department played the main role...

A: In some respect, in the area of security policy, the legal office played a crucial role. In other areas, economic, legal harmonization, the legal office was not in the first line. But whatever concerned the

neutrality issue, the status of neutrality, the compatibility with the EU, was certainly our job to deal with it. And we had to give advice to the minister on this issue. And during the negotiations in Brussels we were involved...

Q: work on the compatibility of neutrality...

A: it worked in two directions... within the government, you still had those who took a rather conservative position towards neutrality in the sense that they took a very wide interpretation of the legal position of a neutral state; what a neutral state must do and must not do. And it was not so easy to convince those who for one generation were told, neutrality is a no-no, it cannot go together with membership. Slowly this changed. We had to plead in favor of compatibility, so we had on the one hand were reluctant and still took the view that for Austria, legally speaking, it was not possible to join. And the others who pushed for membership and said, all this legal argument we don't care; our interest is we must become a member. And a second element, we had to communicate Austria's position to the EU institutions and in the negotiations we had to really find our position on neutrality. Certainly the concept of neutrality was watered down; we are still neutral on paper, in the Constitution, but basically what it means, we are no longer neutral in the framework of the EU. We are participating in the CFSP, in European military operations in the Balkans and other parts of the world, things which are hardly compatible with a very strict vision of neutrality.

Q: Ok, so there were competing arguments about neutrality, and you, the legal office, were the central manager of that question...

A: Yes, we were the central coordinating institution. We had to negotiate with the Chancellery and other players to reposition our country on the political map. After 1955, Austria was associated more or less with the status of neutrality in the world and with a rather rigid concept of neutrality and this changed when we joined the EU. And we were the messengers of this change.

Q: the Russians....

A: the Russians were not very happy with the Austrian...with this change. Because for Russia, the main point, the real interest they had in our neutrality is to have a guarantee that Austria would never ever join NATO. When they agreed in 1955 to leave Austria, they did so only under the condition that Austria would not join NATO. For them, the guarantee of this was Austria's neutrality. So for the Russians it was not easy to digest that we would join the EU and that we would water down neutrality to its bear bones and that we would move away from neutrality in the sense that it was understood and conceived in 1955.

Q: And when you were ambassador to Russia...

A: They still spoke a lot about neutrality..."we take the view that Austria's neutrality is an important element of European security policy" but they did not object to our sovereign right to join the EU. They never criticized the fact that we became a member of the EU, but at the same time they always stressed Austria as a neutral country and Austria's neutrality, bla, bla, bla...

Q: Okay. ...

A: Well there was one moment...when the Soviet Union collapsed at the end of 1991...then there was the question of the succession of USSR...Russia... ..in Austria, my predecessor took an original point of view: he said, well Russia is a totally new legal entity...then he state treaty of 1955 is no longer valid... This position made the Russians furious! They didn't like it at all. And we had very angry conversations with the Russian legal adviser from the foreign ministry, who really attacked us: how can you challenge the very fact that we are exactly the same as the Soviet Union, that we are, legally speaking, the continuation...and we had a hard time to explain our new position of the so-called clean-slate. And we had a hard time because a lot of states (and the EU), they accepted the Russian opinion, legal view that they were the successor of the USSR. And when we joined in 1995 we had to accept the foreign policy views and positions taken by the EU, including the one on Russia. And so we had to switch from clean slate to the common position of the EU, to the fact that Russia is the same as the EU.

Q: What was the importance of the CFSP in your bilateral postings?

A: When I came in Moscow, it was in 1999, and in 2000 we had this awkward situation with Mr. Haider, a rather controversial but charismatic figure... when the coalition was formed, there was an outcry in the EU; Austria was put into the corner and they imposed sanctions against Austria. The ministers were not invited to meet their colleagues in other European countries, etc. We were really the bag guys of the EU in 2000. But in Russia, where I was the Austrian ambassador, I had no problem, the Russians were delighted to meet with us and receive Austrian ministers and they made jokes about Austria's membership in the EU: "you see what you got now, we are treating you in a friendly fashion and in a courteous way, as it fits sovereign states; in the EU they would not even talk to you. You see, this was very ironic for me to observe. It took half a year before this was settled this problem.

... The Russians they have an ambivalent opinion about the EU altogether; they prefer to deal with nations...the EU is an artificial creature for them...for them.

Q: How did you experience the entry into the EU?

A: We had to, there was the need for much more coordination between the government agencies...weekly coordination meetings...in the past there was not such a need to coordinate positions as such regular rhythm. And this need for cohesion, coherence, of the government policy and also the need for reform of the Austrian economic and political system, only started or became relevant after we had joined the EU...a much more coordinated way to do business...between the different government agencies. There is a greater pressure to get your acts together...when there's a time limit set for this or that decision to be taken in Brussels, there's no way out, you have to prepare the position at home, otherwise you're lost. And this is a whole new ball game. And also the role of the Parliament; there were a number of laws passed in connection to the entry into the EU...the government has a whole new commitment to account for what it's doing vis-à-vis the Parliament...over 60% of legislation is coming from Brussels... This is not really understood by regular people... And that changes the whole political system in Austria.

Q: You co-wrote a book about the EU negotiations...

A: The idea was – and I must say it was a bit my idea - to have a book that explains the EU as an ongoing process of negotiation. You have numerous books, you could fill libraries with any aspects of the EU, but surprisingly enough, not much was written dealing with the EU as a process of negotiations...In is in fact a fascinating continuous process of negotiations, between the governments, within the Commission...it is a very complex process of negotiation. And the concept of the book was to focus on the process aspect of the EU. ... the first EC commissioner said: The EU is like a bicycle; if you stop moving the paddles, it falls down. I thought this is a very good image to describe the process of moving. ...

Q: ...

A: ... If you take the area of foreign policy, all of sudden Austria, through the agenda of the EU, is involved in matters for which Austria didn't give a damn before. Before we joined the EU, we had no real motivation to get entangled in affairs like Soudan or whatever, which is now on top of the agenda of the EU when it comes to foreign policy. So through the European integration, we are obliged to take a position and participate in the decision-making process concerning European missions all over the world. So it's a new dimension of foreign policy.

Q: In the working groups of the Council, is the dynamic different than in other multilateral fora?

A: Well, it is more action-oriented. For instance, in the case of Iran, the EU at the working-group level has to take operative decisions...

Q: Main changes in the foreign ministry...

A: After our admission to the EU, the main focus of our foreign policy shifted to Brussels. And if you ask me, who is the most important ambassador of Austria, anywhere in the world, I would say immediately it is our representative to the European Union. He is not just representing the country vis-à-vis another country but he is involved in the negotiations at the Coreper level; he is really like a transmission belt between the government in Vienna and how Austria's positions are formulated in Brussels. And this is a completely new foreign policy game. So the EU is certainly the most important element of foreign policy now. Not only with regard to the interest we have to defend in Brussels, but also in all areas of foreign policy, because there is a need for coordination. For instance, Croatia, problem with Slovenia...of course, this is a bilateral issue but it has a European aspect because... Slovenia can prevent its accession...

Entretien 19

Vienne, 14 juillet

Q : In a chapter you wrote in a book by Michael Gehler... you mentioned something ...

A : When you read Austrian history, Maria Theresa in the 18th century did a big reform of the Austrian administration and the whole civil service and she introduced something called the Maria Theresia...(in German). And this sort of laid out all the procedures for an orderly, transparent and clear administration: the way officers write to each other, what kind of forms you use...a filing system...all this dates back to the 18th century. And when I was writing my thesis - on Metternich and the relations to England after the Congress of Vienna – I was sitting in the archives and I was reading all the reports and the instructions that went out to the ambassador and the reports that were coming in. And you saw very clearly how the administrative system also worked; not only sort of the art of diplomacy, but how sort of the files were kept and the procedures were followed. And when I entered the ministry of foreign affairs, my then first

boss was not completely aware of my history background and he said well the first thing that you have to read is sort of the basic instruction how we communicate and we write to each other and so forth. And so I was writing that in Gehler's book that I was looking at that and it was exactly the same thing! I know that from the archives! It hasn't changed at all. Even you can put it further up because the ministry of foreign affairs was the first administration office in Vienna that went completely electronic in the sort of information age. And we introduced an electronic filing system, which is exactly based on the old Maria Theresa's system...so we just took the whole system and made it electronic. As far as the art of diplomacy is concerned, first of all I think you have to separate two things: foreign policy and diplomacy; foreign policy is sort of the political background, but diplomacy is the craft with which you work. If you look back a little bit, Austria has always had a good tradition of negotiating and the art of negotiation if you so want. That goes back for a very very long time; we were never exceedingly powerful even when there was still the Austro-Hungarian Empire...it was not a military power, and so forth... But sort of the art of diplomacy, the art of negotiation, the art of coming to your goals by other means, you know, was always pretty strong in Austria. And this is something that is still alive today. If you look at the role Austrian diplomacy plays in international organizations for instance, you will see that it's a little bit larger than what we are actually supposed to have, you know. I mean Austria is a middle-size country, but in IO we assume a role which is much bigger than what we actually are. And that's because we have still a very good diplomatic training and skills in negotiating and being useful in developing international law, and so forth.

Q: ... international law in Austrian diplomacy...

A: ...we feel that for a country of our stature and our size, to have a reliable environment based on law and order and so on, it's very important. And we have been very much involved in the development of international law in general, with a specialization perhaps I should mention: humanitarian law, environmental law, outer space law...Austria was for decades the chairman of the Outer Space Committee at the UN and we developed most of the space law that is in existence today. So security issues have always been relevant...

Q: Okay. Since the integration of Austria in the EU, how has the Austrian diplomacy departed from her sort of mediating role...

A: On the one side you have sort of the skills that are still there, where people are still trained in it. If you look at the training procedures that we have at the Diplomatic Academy and the in-house training we have, this is a very important part of it, still. What has changed with our entry in the EU is more the content and the parameters of our work. Because... and I have sort of experienced it on the spot because I went in 1992 as bilateral ambassador to France, and in 1995 when we became member of the EU I was still there; I stayed until 1997. And so I experienced the change. The change was in the...before, we were looking at the bilateral relationship between France and Austria, which is a very historically charged one...goes back to the Bourbon-Habsburg...but that was the bilateral relationship; how are our cultural exchanges, how are we perceived, do we have political issues that need to be dealt with. That was the bilateral framework. With our entry in the EU, that changed suddenly, because all of sudden, Vienna was no longer interested in my profound remarks about the bilateral relations to France. They wanted to know what is France going to do at the next fishery Council and how are they going to vote on transport issues and energy issues and so forth. So the content of our work became experienced as a qualitative and a quantitative change. Qualitatively because the issues changed, and quantitatively because it went way beyond what was the usual contact to the other foreign office; we dealt all of a sudden with trade union, institutions of higher education, whatever. Because the whole agenda of the EU then, was now part of our work. So the change was less in the skills and the craftsmanship of how we went about to do it, but it was in the content of the tasks.

Q: And while in Paris, did your relationship to your French counterparts change...became closer since your were not anymore in a traditional bilateral relationship?

A: Yes, of course. With the entry into the EU, we automatically became integrated into the group of European ambassadors. At that time it was still the 15 and when we joined, in the first 6 months of 1995 France had the presidency of the EU. So that what really an incredible learning experience, also because we could see what was happening, how they were handling the presidency; we were, as European ambassadors, on the spot, much involved in the whole exercise of those 6 months. And the relationship then between the 15 became very intense and sort of very much the central focus of our work. On the other side, we were not allowed, for evident reasons, to ignore the relations to the rest of the world. Because France and Paris is a very good playing ground, so to say, for seeing what is going on in Africa, in the old French colonies...all the old French colonies had huge embassies in Paris, and you could, by

cultivating these relationships, you could provide important and relevant information for Vienna. But that was sort of on the sidelines. The EU issues became the central focus.

Q: And given the fact that by joining the EU, Austria had to incorporate new issues, new regions, in its foreign policy, how did you adapt to that?

A: You see you cannot totally separate that from the way the EU works internally. And one thing is that every MS comes of course with a dollery and with a Rudsak o the back of historical relations...In our case that was the relations to the parts of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. France... So there is a lot of know-how about the rest of the world, which is then put at the use of the other EU MS. Because if we're debating an issue from let's say Honduras, we will rely on the information that we get from Spain... Or if we dealt with Slovakia or Romania, it was Austria that could bring a special contribution... So that's very important. And for a country like Austria, it meant that of course we were taking whatever advice we could get from the others. But we also tried to develop or prepare, really, to deal with those issues on our own. Because when you assume the Presidency, you are in the lead and you have to deal with...so it obliged us to get broader in our content. And we intensified also the knowledge-base of the ministry. We tried to do that mostly by using internal capacities; hiring of external experts in our system is a little bit difficult, because of the rigidity of our civil service legislation. You can, but... And we had to hire young people during the periods of the presidencies to fill gaps. But as far as the know-how is concerned, we usually try to fill that from in-house possibilities. With a bit of cooperation with research institutes and think tanks. Like Gerda Falkner used to be an interlocutor of the ministry of foreign affairs...the Austrian Institute of international politics...

Q: How was the foreign ministry prepared for its integration in the EU? training...?

A: The whole role that Austria has to play in the EU exceeds the foreign ministry; all the other ministries are involved as well...so there were a lot of civil servants who were specialists in their field, but not used to take part in international conferences, negotiating in other languages, so we had to have a very intense training program, going beyond the ministry of foreign affairs and reaching out the whole administration. And even beyond the administration because in our federal system we also had representatives of the Lander... So that was a very broad process. And we started well before we even started the negotiations. We started that process the moment the decision was taken to apply for membership. We sent our letter to Brussels requesting membership in July 1989, so the whole preparatory process had started in 1987 approximately where we were looking sectorily what needs to be done to prepare us to play a positive role as member of the EU. And in the lead of that education process or transformation process was the ministry for foreign affairs, because there was the expertise how the EU works and what would be needed.

Q: Why did Austria decide to apply for membership at the end of the 1980's and not before? Why was it feasible then and not before?

A: Well that's an issue that cannot be separated from the whole post-war history of Austria, you know. Because when...you know that after 1945 Austria was for 10 years occupied by the four allies... and a peace treaty with Austria was only negotiated...Austria was negotiating over the years but then was signed and became effective in 1955. In combination with the status of Austria as a neutral country, between the Warsaw Pact and NATO, on the fringes of the iron curtain. And that touched on the whole issue of European integration because on the Soviet side, the European Communities were seen as a kind of economic forefront of NATO and they did not want Austria...they would have regarded that as a violation of our status of neutrality. So it would have been politically a very risky game and other partners did not want to rock the boat in this delicate atmosphere of the Cold War. And at the end of the sixties, 1967-1968, Austria made an attempt to join the EC that failed. So from that period on, based on that experience, we were trying to negotiate sectorially, as closer relationships as possible. But we felt increasingly that with the Single European Act and the treaty of Maastricht...we had really come to the end of the road; that we could not go any further without really jumping in. And what happened is that a window of opportunity opened up with the change in leadership in the Soviet Union and the whole Perestroïka and Glasnost and Gorbachev taking a very different look, how he saw the world and the relationship to the West. And we decided then, this is such an opportunity that we have to jump. And that was why the decision was taken at that particular point in time. ... The decision was taken for political reasons as well as for economic reasons. Because also you know, with the whole history of Austria, we wanted to be part of that European process and by following the procedures that we had been following for the past 50 years we couldn't go any further. So you had to be in the mainstream to really do that.

Q: Okay. Waldheim issue...

A: It was more an Austria-US issue than a European issue...it did not play much a role in our decision to join the EC. There was much more other issues: how we solved the neutrality question, how we could get agreement of the four allies...

Q: ...

A: If you look at the chronology of events, in the fall of 1986 we had elections and we had a new coalition government, which was chancellor Vranitsky from the social-democrats as head of government and the head of the conservative party (OVP) as foreign minister, Alois Mock. In that first coalition agreement they put already down the goal of joining the EU; so that was in the fall of 1986.

Q: neutrality issue: how did it evolve...?

A: Well first of all we had a big discussion internally because, you know, neutrality is a specific form of security policy but in the mind of the Austrian it became something different and they sort of attributed to neutrality all the positive developments that Austria had in the postwar period: the economic progress, the political stature that we gained...they thought was because we were a neutral country. And the second factor, was that, particularly among the young generation, who thought this was a particularly moral position to take...you're peaceful... So these two factors made for a big internal discussion. And also, of course, we had to find a way to fit into the EU, which is also a Union based on solidarity. And we then modified the existing Austrian neutrality law by including one paragraph where it says that sort of issues of European solidarity will have precedence over the Constitutional obligation to remain neutral. So that was a way out of ending the dilemma; we still maintained the status of neutrality as a kind of fig leaf you know, for modesty's sake. But on the other side, we incorporated into the law the obligation to have solidarity on the European level, in case, which is rather abstract but in case a European country is under attack or something.

... I mean it has been reduced really to the hard core: that we don't have military basis in Austria and outside of Austria, no defense pact, etc. On the other side, we have always been very active in international peace keeping. We also do that by participating in European missions, in the EUFOR and so forth. So we are actively involved in international security issues. But we have not made the big leap sort of into the NATO mission...neutrality is still there; it's a legal and a political issue. It has not hindered us to play an active international role but we have not basically changed it.

Q: So would say what prevents an application to NATO is the public opinion?

A: Yes...because this would mean that we really formally do away with neutrality. And to do that you need a 2/3 majority in Parliament and on that basis, a positive referendum. And it's very doubtful that we would gain that. So no government has really tackled it. We've been trying, especially in the 1990's, to stir a bit the public debate about this issue and effect a change in the Austrian public opinion. It was moderately successful until the NATO bombardment in Kosovo...so then there was a big mood swing and a backlash. And finally, they said what for? I mean we are now member of the EU, we are surrounded by NATO countries, we have no enemies, nobody is going to attack us; why do we have to do that? In the public debate at the moment I would say it's a non-issue.

Q: Presidency in 1998...

A: We knew already when we joined that I order of succession we would have to take the presidency in the second semester of 1998. The first presidency I had to deal as Austrian ambassador in London and the second one in 2006 I was in Washington. It was a totally different experience, totally different experience. As far as the general question is concerned, I would say that by having this growing relationship to the EU over a long period of time and having been very closely involved in contacts...we saw what was necessary, how a presidency worked and so forth, even before we became members. So the "to do" list was already there; we knew exactly what was expected from us and there were no big surprises. The surprises came really by factors from outside, unexpected developments; in 1998 and in 2006. Because you can have the best preparations and have all your people in place, and you know exactly what the issues are, and there's the agenda of the EU and you're involved and prepared to handle everything, something will happen outside which sort of disturb the whole master plan that you had made for yourself. Concretely, in preparation for 1998, it meant hiring short-terms employees from outside, because you need a lot of manpower, just to handle this multitude of meetings. Because the EU works on a worldwide level and you have coordination meetings in South Africa...wherever the EU is present, which means around 192 countries. Then you have all the international organization where the EU organizes in coordinates itself. In New York at the UN, you basically duplicate the whole General Assembly in EU meetings, because you coordinate the positions, you coordinate statements and votes, and you also do it in other regional and international organizations. So it's a huge task. And you need lots of people of course to lead these negotiations and to be in charge of that. So it meant training of short-term people, not only in the ministry of foreign affairs but in all the other parts of the civil service as well. It meant of course looking at the agenda, developing your own special focus; where you want to have a special emphasis, areas that are particularly important for your own country. In our case it was moving forward the negotiations with our Central and Eastern European neighbors; that was a very important focus for Austria in 1998. ... The

biggest issue that we had on the EU agenda was the negotiations for the 1998-2003 budget...and in August there was a crisis with the Ruble, in September the violent explosions in Kosovo... there were a lot of outside issues which impacted on the presidency...there are always on the spots rearranging that you have to do; that's always the case. For me the big difference was that the role of an Austrian ambassador in the presidency of the EU, in a EU country, like the UK, was totally different than what I had to do in Washington. The difference couldn't be greater. In Europe the interaction on a direct level between the various branches of the administration have grown so much that, as an ambassador, you are running to be informed about what is going on...and to have your little input. But I mean they call each other constantly, all the offices talk to each other...they know each other from the meetings... And if let's say the Austrian prime minister needs something from the British prime minister, he just calls him up. There is no more this intermediary role of the embassy; the embassy is then sort of for the small print or for filing in something which perhaps in a direct phone call conversation cannot be dealt with, where you have to go into greater debts, things like that. But that was basically it. In Washington, during the presidency of the EU, I was a negotiating partner for the American government; I had to coordinate on the spot positions among already at that time 27 and we had a number of issues which had to be negotiated with the American government, which went then through the Austrian embassy. In addition to what we have in NATO transatlantic machinery. But there you are really a negotiating partner for the Americans. And the representative on the spot of the EU. Also vis-à-vis the Congress.

Q: difference between multilateral in the EU and multilateral in other international fora?

A: Well, first of all it became a little more difficult if I compare 1998 and 2006, because of the enlarged EU. The 15 in 1998 was still more homogenous and easier to handle; it was easier to get a consensus and to develop a line of policy among the 15 than it is with the 27. We had big internal differences if you think back to the position of European countries vis-à-vis the Iraq war, vis-à-vis the American government and so on; there was a breaking line through the EU. And in that respect it was more difficult to negotiate for the EU and to negotiate within the EU. And, to give you a concrete example, one of the hottest potatoes during that presidency was the negotiations we had about the visa free entry into the US. Because all EU MS had a visa program for entry into the US, which the new members didn't have. So they wanted to get on that visa status and it was very difficult to negotiate with the Americans who were terribly security minded after 9/11 and didn't really want to give visa-free entries to these countries. ...the final compromise... so you can imagine that these negotiations were really really difficult...difficult also internally...

Q: ... multilateral diplomacy in general...

A: not really change in the "modes of operating"...What has changed, and this is not only EU relevant, I mean this is a change through a number of development...the actors are becoming much more diverse; you are no longer with the minister of foreign affairs, you are negotiating with very diverse partners...outside the government, sometimes with "one-issue" partners, NGOs, transnational businesses... but the basic instruments that you use, how to approach the negotiations, how to make your points listened and understand the points of the other sides, understand the background of an issue, this has not changed much...the whole parameters in which you operate have changed, but not the tools of negotiations.

Q: What are the main changes brought by the EU membership for the Austrian foreign ministry?

A: First of all, we had to reorganize the whole ministry internally because formerly we had a section for political relations, a section for economic relations, one for cultural relations; it was sort of vertically organized according to subjects. And as the EC at that point was only an economic organization, there was only a small section within the economic division that dealt with the EC. And then all of a sudden it became the central focus of our foreign relations. So we had to reorganize the internal structure of the ministry to cope with what was needed. Then, as I said earlier, the ministry was in the lead for the training-formation for all the other civil servants. The third thing is that the foreign ministry has been charged, since we became member, with a central coordinating role. And in a country like Austria which is so federally organized, decisions taken at the European level have consequences right down to the level of the communities or the lander... So there's a huge demand for internal coordination, for which the foreign minister is the lead agency. So we do have weekly coordination meetings that go back to the moment we became members of the EU, for the Coreper meetings... So this internal coordinating role, which we didn't have before, was also a consequence of our membership in the EU.

Q: Concerning the resources – money, staff – devoted by Austria to its role in the EU, do you think Austria devotes enough resources?

A: No we should have much more. The basic financial contribution of Austria to the EU is assessed in terms of the GNP... The problem for the ministry of foreign affairs is that there's a dichotomy: one the

one side, we were confronted with the need to be more present, to have more manpower, to be more involved; and at the same time we were confronted with a government policy of cutting back on the civil service I general, reducing the number of civil servants...The ministry of foreign affairs is a small ministry in the Austrian system and the cuts that we were obliged to make were a very very bitter pill to swallow. And it made it very difficult in some respect to handle the issues that were coming, and still is. The Austrian ministry of foreign affairs has 0,3% of the Austrian total budget, which is not much. And it is 1265 employees at the moment, which is smaller than an internationally operating law firm.

Q: ok. Do you think Austria manages to “take its place” in the EU, to influence policies...?

A: Well yes and no. On the one side, if you look at it in greater details, you will see that we have, as far as the ministry of foreign affairs is concerned, very good people working on the European issues. The people that are sitting in Brussels, our permanent representative and so forth, they are all very competent and very good; at the moment they get involved and they are in the lead of the negotiations; it usually works quite well. But many people, and I include myself, feel that we have not played our membership role to the fullest possibilities. That we could have done much more; that we were selective in the issues in which we got involved, that we were...that politically also, through a number of unhappy developments, we were putting ourselves occasionally in a confrontational situation, with sort of the EU on the one side and Austria on the other being victimized by unpopular decisions in Brussels (not referring here to Haider episode but rather to the political instrumentalization of the EU on the national level), which were then politically exploited; that we have not really entered sort of the mainstream of the political discussions within the EU. we were, for instance, very good in negotiating in the Convention, for the Constitutional treaty, where Austria just by skillful operating became a kind of spokesman for the smaller European countries vis-à-vis the bigger ones, to influence everything. So these were shining moments really. But on the whole I would say, the whole political establishment in Austria does not really see the EU as an enlarged political arena in which they operate, you know. They concentrate on issues that are, they think, politically relevant, and it has always been transport-traffic, nuclear power, these very selective issues but they don't really involve themselves in the mainstream debate. And I think that these are sort of the two sides of the coin: on the one side you have very good people who working there, but on the other side, you have a political level who is not using the possibilities that are there to the fullest extent.

Q: The Haider episode in 2000...

A: ... Many Austrians saw that as an insult from the other EU MS and felt that rather deeply. On the other side, it was exactly our membership and the EU which got us through that difficult period, which many Austrians don't see, because it was the Commission that served as a “watchdog”; they were the guardians of our rights and our interests in the EU and in the half year when these measures were in place we could operate fully as a member of the EU. Which was very interesting because I don't think people are really aware to what extent the Commission, as guardian of the treaties, obliged the other MS who were all sort of against Austria at that time, to play by certain rules. That was very interesting to see. I was at that time in the foreign ministry responsible for European integration as head of the DGIII and we could operate without major interruptions and major difficulties, in the various Council and committee meetings and so forth. Whereas bilaterally, we had lots of difficulties.

Q: Ok. Closer relations with certain MS or it depends more on the issues at stake?

A: It always depends on the issues at stake. You have certain issues where you can have unexpected alliance forming with a particular country. For instance, France, although sort of a major operator in the EU and a big country, has a very similar tradition vis-à-vis the state and the responsibilities of the state, and Constitutional law, like Austria. And we have always had a good cooperation here. So for instance when it comes to the whole concept of liberalization, applied to certain services that the state provides, France and Austria have very often found themselves in an alliance. Or you have similar concerns regarding heavy transport issues with Slovenia as a transit country also to the South. We have always had close relations to the Nordic countries for a variety of reasons that have their own history: the EFTA relationship, neutrality, that sort of forms a bound, so the relationship between Austria, Finland, Sweden, also through the negotiating experience has always been a close one. And we have then since 1989-1990, reinforced our relationships with the Eastern and Central European countries... it has not been possible in all areas, but on a number of issues we still have a very close and intense cooperation.

Q: Is the relation to the CEEC more sensitive, more difficult to develop, because of history: the Austro-Hungarian Empire...?

A: Yes and no. There are certain areas where the relationship played, how should I say, a very positive role, immediately after 1989 when it came to the internal transformation of these countries because they could fall back on administrative procedures, legal procedures, for which there was a historical base. And we had after 1989... we had many many meetings with our neighbors regarding sort of how to do certain

things, how to modify or reorganize their laws, write new codes of law, etc. where they were looking at Austria because the historical base was similar and on the basis of tradition was something you could build up. On the other side, we were very careful not to overemphasize this relationships...it's historically important and it's still has effects today, in culture, in human relations, in traditions and so forth. But we were very careful not to present ourselves as "We are the wealthy cousins and you are the poor cousins, and we are now the do-gooders and we show you the light". We were taking them as equal partners, trying to be helpful, but not too much emphasis on the old relationships, not to infringe on their own sense of identity.

Q: evolution of the ministry of foreign affairs...

A: an important change...when I came in, the ministry of foreign affairs was still the domain of jurists; legal training, international law background. And it was only in the 1970's and 1980's that the ministry opened to a broader spectrum of ...we got in political scientists, people with language training, historians as myself...it became much more colorful. And that made for a different approach to issues then, because as a political scientist or a historian, your access to a problem will be different from a lawyer, who looks...sneakily circumscribe what are the implications. Historians look at...how things developed...so maybe it made a change. And third change came from outside... the times when a ministry of foreign affairs was handling all the outside relations of a particular country to the rest of the world are gone; we do no longer have this monopoly.

... The role of diplomacy against the backdrop of globalization is more to allow change and developments in a rather stable environment to happen, but no longer to be the central agent in this respect...(diplomats are...) guardians of change.

Q: Attitude of Austrian diplomats towards EU membership?

A: You have colleagues who were used to work under completely different circumstances and who found it very difficult adapt. Then you had, and this was my generation, for whom the membership in the EU was really something to be wished for and worked for, and who were very eagerly involved in doing that and saw as something very positive for their country and also very easy to adapt. And then you have the young people...they were born into it, this is something that is evident for them.

Entretien 20

Vienne, 14 juillet

Q : Why did Austria apply for membership in 1989... why at that precise moment ?

A : The whole process of Austria in European integration actually started in 1961. The foreign minister, Kreisky, applied for a "special treaty", he called it; this expression was used to...(?); basically it was something based on the association agreement article of the treaty of the EC. Now, this, we started the negotiations, I was already in the team and then, we had one opposition, from Italy. Italy said we cannot continue the negotiations with Austria because you have these Tyroleans who would like to support the movement of Tyloeoans who live in Italy in South Tyrol...and you can't support this movement. ... So we had then to settle this conflict with Italy... Now this problem was then solved... However, another problem came up, because Austria wanted in the association agreement the common agricultural policy. Now France said the CAP is one of the center stone of the new European integration, if you want to participate in the CAP you cannot participate as an associate country; you must be member, because there are decisions for this policy that you have to take daily...this is not working. So they said... then the Russians objected. Because, they said, you're neutral and you don't want to include a neutral state (was then the Cold War). The Russians were interested to keep, with Switzerland and Austria, a kind of blocking between the NATO countries, Italy and Germany. The Cold War started slowly to fade... But we always pursued our initiatives towards the European integration. Why? Austria is surrounded by MS of the EU; most of the exports go to this area. There was another organization called the EFTA; the EFTA was a counter-organization pushed very much by Britain, but Britain used the EFTA as a way to make a counter... a bloc against the then 6 EC members. ... The integration in a customs union is always faster, whereas if you're a free-trade area, you have the problem that you have to analyze all the goods passing your borders... (interruption) So, the EC and the EFTA were more conflicting blocs. Then Britain left the EFTA...people who stayed in EFTA said ? ... What is now the EU got always stronger... We knew, and especially the internal market showed that integration within this bloc got always stronger and stronger and it's always more difficult for outsiders, like EFTA, to bring their goods within the EC market. So we said, well, we have to do something. So we were, among the EFTA countries the "avant-garde"; we always tried for a better agreement. We had the ? meeting where for the first time the EC and the EFTA

started to meet; the two organizations didn't talk to each other for years. 1986, I was then ambassador in ?; they called me back, they said "..., please come back, we need you". Why? Because I was one of the very few diplomats of the Austrian foreign service who went to the Collège de Brugges, who knew the *acquis communautaire*, all these things... now you have Mr. ... in the Diplomatic Academy who is also from the Collège de Brugges...these are the real ones, who keep the wholly fire of European integration. So we started a program where we said, slowly we should prepare to apply for membership. We asked for membership in 1989, before the wall broke down in Berlin, BEFORE. We put in our membership application in July. The other EFTA countries were not happy about it; they said "oh, you're betraying...". But I think we were on the right track because all the other EFTA countries, after criticizing Austria, after criticizing me, they all did the same thing. Now, then, the Commission president, Delors, he thought it's not very good if neutral countries join the EC, because he wanted closer integration. He invented something, it was called the European Economic Area (EEA), which was that the EFTA countries could take over the 4 freedoms, integrate as much as possible, but not be part of the institutions... so it was, if you put it in frank works, a kind of autonomous follow-up of the EU rules; you don't make the rules but you take them all, so the discrimination was more or less abolished. Now the EEA was something which, we thought, like a "test", it was a kinder-garden of the European integration, a training ground; useful, but not enough. ...

Q: Ok. You talked a bit about the reaction of the Commission to your membership application, but what were the reactions of the MS, from your point of view?

A: They were, well... they wanted, more or less, to have the system as it was before. You know, basically, in European integration, they are not looking for new members because each new member is a lot of new problems, you have to change the composition of the Commission, etc. Since the system is so complex... if you enlarge, you have more problems. So the enthusiasm to look for new members is not in Brussels. The new members have to say how good you are... About neutrality, yes it was a problem and it was a problem which we, Austrians, made more complicated. We have a law, a Constitutional law of neutrality. In Switzerland, neutrality is not a law, it's a practical... Now, in this Austrian Constitutional law, there are 2 articles. The first one, no foreign troops in Austria and no military alliance. Whereas the Austrian community at the university started to elaborate a concept of neutrality in such a way that neutrality was pushed towards something more like non-alliance. ? He said all right, we can join the EU but we must change the way of interpretation of neutrality from an extensive to a restrictive interpretation; restrictive interpretation, what is in the Constitution, no foreign troops, no military alliance. You put only this, and not say about ? and all the other (games?) you can use with neutrality. Then we could join. So we applied for I wrote the application note...; we wrote about neutrality (3 notes for the 3 communities – we, Austrians, are of the opinion that our permanent neutrality is compatible with European integration. WE think so. It was a ~particular position; we knew that some in the Commission didn't like it because they wanted to have only NATO members, but already they had included Ireland... So we said, we are of the opinion... Finally, the Maastricht treaty came into force and we looked over very carefully, each article. So... we think according to the Maastricht treaty we could join. In the meantime, the negotiations on the EEA continued, they were finalized and all the other EFTA countries also joined, but not Switzerland... So, you see, whereas we said the EEA is the kinder garden for membership, it's good to have it uh, but the real thing is membership... And so we made... we put the EEA and we always concentrated on membership. Whereas the Swiss, they started to blow up the EEA... So for us it was a first step. It's a different attitude. But you know, in Switzerland, also they always called themselves neutral... non-aligned.

Q: You participated in the negotiations...

A: I was a good looking young man when I started the negotiations...they were really tough.

Q: One of my questions about that was, were these negotiations particularly different than what you were used to?

A: Yes, much more complex. In the membership negotiations, we had to integrate 60,000 pages of the *acquis communautaire*. 60,000! So what we did, we went through ALL the 60,000 pages. During all the time of the negotiations I didn't read any literary book anymore, I only did that thing! We had then to change 100 laws on the provincial level and 90 laws on the federal level. So it was a huge change in Austria. We had to introduce things like competition policy... we had to do a big change in the whole system. And... it was very difficult. We were negotiating with Brussels, but also with all the pressure groups in Austria... you know everybody wanted special privileges (e.i. honey makers). We said no, you have to take the *acquis communautaire*, you have a transitional period but...either you join or not. In all those discussions, from time to time, I had to explain everything to Austrian constituencies, like the honey makers... So it was a very very hard and difficult work, yes. I was very unusual for a diplomat, I stayed 13

years in Vienna, which financially, my wife told me this is a big disaster, because diplomats are very lousy paid at home and very well paid outside...

Q: What was the mood in the foreign ministry, towards membership in the EU; were people enthusiastic about membership?

A: In the foreign ministry you had 2 different groupings: the first grouping was in the Economic DG, where I was, we said there's a need to join, for economic reasons; if we don't join, Austria will slowly fall back economically, it will be more difficult to bring the Austrian products to the EU market and slowly we will go the Yugoslav way. Whereas in the political department, no no, neutrality is such an important thing, this is a new, a kind of "Herzatz religion", religion of Austria you know, where we suddenly... now we're not anymore Germany and neutrality makes it different... So there were different groupings in the foreign ministry, yes this is true. We had internal long discussions...

Q: So that means that people in the political department were more attached to all the traditions attached to neutrality...?

A: Yes...mentality of the non-aligned movement. They didn't see that the non-aligned movement was slowly fading away.

Q: How was it for you at the beginning of Austria's membership...?

A: Basically, I had the feeling of "mission accomplished". Because I am of the generation... I'm born in 1939, on the same day of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact... my family was persecuted by the Nazis... so with all of this in my family genes... My personal feeling was I want to leave Austria to my children in such a way that something like the Second World War will not repeat itself. For me, it was a strong political mission... only the European integration would prevent having war between France and Germany. Now, for the young generation, they don't understand it; war, this is only something you read in history books. But this is something you have to preserve. And for me, it's always something... If you look at Yugoslavia, one currency, one internal market and the Croats marrying the Serbs... and suddenly everything broke out and you have slaughtering... Which shows that "evil" (?) spirits of the past, they can come back. So for me, to have European integration should guarantee that something terrible like the Second WW doesn't happen again in Europe. I have a political... everyone talks about the economic things... but for me it goes much deeper. So when we joined it was for me mission accomplished.

Q: Ok. So you went as Permanent Representative in Brussels in 1999, right?

A: "Permanent" representative is a nice word but you're never "permanent"... (laughs)

Q: How did you like your experience as an ambassador there? Were you enthusiastic about this at the beginning?

A: well, I was sent to Brussels, the then Chancellor, Schüssel, said "..., you negotiated the treaty and now you have to clear up this mess in Brussels". So, actually, the job of a permanent representative is a very very difficult job. I think it's the most difficult job in the Austrian diplomacy. Basically, it's a lot of hard work. You have to understand the dossiers, from the roaming fees of the mobiles... you really have to understand it. You basically... my gulf...went down, you have no time to... you really sit, sit, sit, negotiate, negotiate, negotiate. You see your colleagues, the other permanent representatives, you see them more than you see your own wife. You have breakfast, lunch and sometimes dinner with them. You don't have much of these diplomatic dinners anymore, because you have to write your reports at night. You have to be fast really. Why? Because in the EU, it's the not the big ones who eats the small ones, it's the fast ones who eats the slow ones. So if you have a small country, like Austria, you can be as good as big ones if you are fast, have good ideas, if you contribute something. So you really have to be...it's a hard hard work, but it's exciting, because (chuchotement) basically we change society. I think sometimes the Permanent Representative in Brussels is more influential than a minister in Austria. But we are not supposed to say this.

Q: Yeah...people in COREPER play a huge role nowadays...

A: yes they do. But if you are clever, then don't say it outside. If you say it outside you will be replaced within weeks I'll tell you. But I'm retired now...

Q: What was the dynamic of your meetings within the Coreper? You said you were meeting with your colleagues very often... so I guess you know them very well...

A: Yes, you deal by first name with all of them.

Q: Ok, so then it's much different than usual diplomacy, less formal...

A: Yes. Much more enjoyable. ...you have no time to go to receptions. ...

Q: What's the balance between the search for consensus and national interests...?

A: ... The Council represents member states, but at the end, you must find a consensus, a compromise So the art of making a compromise is an art exTREMELY well developed in Brussels. You have lots of tricks, how you... if you have conflicts how to solve conflicts. So basically, if you go to a vote, then something is

not very good. You have the vote... But in practice, you really try to avoid votes. Why? Even if you can vote, you say all right, let's discuss one more week and so on, if you vote somebody down, he will take revenge on the next dossier. ...you can vote somebody down, but it's always at costs. So you really have to calculate is it worth, to create enemies, because you have other things like... You know you really have to calculate. Now, you have a lots of different negotiating techniques, which all have one thing in common, they take time. And 27 is a huge number. Having a family of 27 agreeing on one text... a huge problem. So you have developed tiny things, for example; Brussels has copied things from the Catholic church. They have copied for example... have you seen the movie *Infiniti*? It's the story how the pope is elected; they're all in prison the cardinals... now you're more or less in prison...the ministers...put them in on a week-end meeting and you continue day and night, day and night... we call these meetings "1 shirt", 2 shirts, 3 shirts, means 3 days. You meet, meet, meet. You cannot leave the building of the Council; you must always be ready to be called in by the Council Chair. So this is like the Cardinals...until you have a result. If you break out the meeting, then you have to go down to the lowest floor (Council) and there's the press center. You have to pass through the press and explain why you broke out the meeting. And this is not nice. And the journalists are very good in Brussels...you have the highest concentration of journalists in Brussels like in Washington. ... You have something in the rules of procedures which you call "le confessionnel"; you go for a confession but you don't end out?... this is the principle when the chairman finds out that he cannot find an agreement in the meeting; he says okay, let's stop the meeting, you stay in the house and I call the "confessionnel"; so you move in the next room, which is only 2 sofas, with somebody from the Council Secretariat and the Chairman, and only one person form each delegation; it's individual. And when you come in, the chairman says "where is you bottom line?". So you say, all right, I have a problem with this and this and this, and then he says okay, perhaps I can accommodate you. So if you're a clever chairman, you prepare the ? and then you call the following delegation, etc. Then the Chairman says the meeting is called again... now this is the proposal of the Chair, take it or leave it. ...Give me 10 minutes I have to call my Prime minister. Ok but after 10 minutes we call a vote. If you couldn't reach the prime minister because he's in Parliament... The chairman: "I have discussed... and I think this proposal is accepted by everybody". ...? ...if you would have put this to a vote Mr. Chairman we would have voted against. Yes thank you. You were taken to the protocol. So this is how you (makes sound with his mouth)... This is a technique. Then you have things like "rendez-vous" clause. ... This is that you say a clause now we apply this and this way but we will review the whole thing in 3 years: rendez-vous. Or you make a transition period. ... 5 years maximum... because governments have elections.... The Euro took 11 years until it... between Maastricht and... Time is important in politics. So you have to work on those things, make a compromise and never to ruin the whole machinery...

Q: But how did you adapt to that? I mean, at the beginning how was it...?

A: It is something very interesting. Negotiating is the real art of diplomacy. If this art fails, it's war, war is primitive compared to... You don't really have good training while you're at the... basically this is something you learn out of the errors of others. So for a diplomat, you sit in the second role, you take the notes, you make the protocols, and you listen, listen, listen...10 years, 12 years...then you know techniques uh... And again this is more or less a talent I think. A good negotiator... you must have people who are very clever, very polite and who are able to have creative new solutions . So if you ask me, that means we have to change the Constitution!... you must be solution-oriented. You don't have too many of these people. Even in the diplomatic service... People always... rhetoric, but to make new things you must be quite ?. So this is something where you really look for that kind of talent... personality, language, knowledge and all of this...

Q: Ok. Haider controversy: what was the impact for you in the meetings... how did you cope with the situation?

A: It was very difficult. It was very difficult because I thought it was very unfair, whatever... I had fought for the EU and suddenly because of this coalition with Haider...they put me on uh-uh... on a list they don't uh... they want to deal with me, fine enough. It turned out, that all the ambassadors of Austria in the EU were not received anymore. Not me. Because they were scared that Austria would bloc unanimous decisions. So to me they were always nice and I was always correct with them. I had still... we kept first names and everything. I tested at the beginning... "non non Gregor on ~soupe toujours ensemble (chuchotement)". I don't know if it's true or not but they pretended that they didn't make things without me. But I was always very correct. I was never discriminated but not because I'm such a nice person but because of the possibility that one country would bloc everything. You know when Great Britain... (recalls events involving UK and beef...) ... We...there were discussions in Vienna do we block everything; we said no we don't block decisions. ...? I had to... Not to escalate the conflict in Austria. I

was quite lonely, I can tell you. I'll never write this in my memoirs! But it was very difficult... it went to small things like; they stopped to make these "family pictures" because they said we're not a family anymore vis-à-vis Austrians. I said all right... but then they said all the ministers, from Austria, when they go to the meetings, they should carry papers, both hands. Because the journalists they'll want a picture of an Austrian minister shaking hand with others... So we all came out of the meetings with both hands full of papers, so the temptation of shaking hands is not there. We didn't give them this picture. You know pictures can be very powerful.

Q: How long did it last?

A: Six months. Now what they did against us they should have done it against Italy...Denmark, Netherlands; they didn't do it. So we learned, and the EU learned. It was not repeated anymore.

Q: Last question, how would you say Austria manages to influence policies in the EU and take its place...?

A: I think we did very good. I think we did very well. At the beginning no, we didn't know the networking and everything, but we learned a lot.

Entretien 21

MAE (DG II) juillet 2009

Q: How important is the EU framework for your work?

A: Well, it is important in so far as the EU is in form or the other entertaining relations with all my countries. I mean there are different forms; with Russia, negotiations...; Ukraine... There is an important EU component in this region...with some states there are accession talks,...

Q: And on a daily basis, do you communicate a lot with your European partners: exchange of info, etc.?

A: No, it's mainly done by our Brussels staff...in working groups; we are feeding input in our delegations in Brussels; if necessary they communicate with other EU MS. And on very important issues, we might consult beforehand with other EU countries.

Q: How do you proceed in the formation of Austria's position in Brussels?

A: instruction for Austrian position: in 80% of the cases there are no particular problems, but if it's not the case we must start talking to capitals. Either via Brussels, where they would consult with Germany, France, the UK, or we start talking with different capitals; there's a number of outgoing or incoming visits of ministers, officials, so we use the opportunity to try to do some work to convince them of our position.

Q: How successful are you to promote the Austrian position on the Balkans for instance, which is an important region for Austria?

A: Well usually we think that we're pretty successful when it comes to the Western Balkans in particular, I mean to make this EU perspective for all these countries. I mean there was a little bit of a snag in 2006: enlargement fatigue...and then we had a new formal foreign ministers' meeting in Salzburg, where we were able to write it down once again and ? our position and we...? I think generally we're quite successful; obviously there's some instances where we could not convince one or 2 partners but this was due to internal politics in these countries and in the case of Serbia... so far we could not convince one particular MS. But in general I think we are... we don't have the feeling that we are important (in the EU) but we're... (Interrupted by me to precise this point)

... (hesitant) well, everybody is ready to acknowledge that we have a certain inside knowledge in this region...we're usually seen as being friendly and... for example we have Mr... now in Bosnia as High Representative...I think it was a certain recognition of our role; we have the head of mission of the OSCE in Kosovo...

Q: Related to that, how is it for a small country like Austria in the EU...?

A: I think you must understand the dynamics within the EU. Obviously of course objectively we are a mid-size country – I mean there are much smaller countries. Obviously the French, the Germans, the big ones, they have considerable influence. But it sort of really depends on the subject; if there's a subject where they have the feeling that maybe you have a little bit more insight or where you have a particular interest, this is usually being recognized. And in our case, they all recognize we have a particular interest in stabilizing the Western Balkans, and see them moving closer to the EU. So this interest which is being recognized by our partners is obviously helping to increase your influence on certain issues.

Q: 1995: how was it...? ...the process of adaptation?

A: Uh, it was not difficult; I mean it took some time to understand the processes within the EU; how this whole machinery would work, because what you're having...you have a constant process of...in the sense doing foreign policy, I mean there's constant "chat room" if you'd like, among the 27 in the meantime,

which goes via working groups, ministers' meetings, meetings but also via this COREU system; you have a constant flow - and I think we're having 17,000 COREUs a year, which would flow on any subject between the EU capitals. And it changed because we were suddenly in this process, I mean you could not...you had to develop a reflex that you are part of a group and you're not going alone, and you cannot go alone because you have partners and whatever you do and what you say should in a way be cleared among this group. So this was a changing attitude which did not exist before. At the same time, what sort of limitations this group put on our ability to conduct our own autonomous foreign policy... It helped a lot in terms of information gathering; you simply know much more once you're within this chat room thing and part of the working groups, etc.

Q Ok, and you were in Washington, right when Austria joined...

A: yes, well in Washington it doesn't change a lot, because what you have there is sort of monthly meetings of heads of mission... but this was not... Washington is an atypical place for EU foreign action because in Washington the bilateral component is still very strong. So the Brits would do it on their own, French have their special... Irish are very important in Washington. So this EU dimension was maybe not as important as it is in other places like I don't know... in Pakistan, in Afghanistan, where you have an important development aid component.

Q: Ok. Concerning your position in the PSC... how different or similar was it from your previous positions as diplomats...?

A: Well, it's an EU framework, it was the first time I was working in the EU framework, and the thing is it's a different working method because on bilateral issues you usually go out and do what you want. When you pursue some bilateral issues within the EU, you're part of a structure: you have regular meetings, you have to consult left and right, you have to look at other actors which are having an influence about EU decision making, like the Council Secretariat, the Solana office is playing an important role, the Commission also playing a role. So you have to watch out what's going on. But you have a structure.

Q: Within the PSC, how divergent were the views of the MS? What is difficult to have fruitful discussions?

A: It really depends on the subject. The EU has a solid record of established EU positions on a number of issues, ranging from the Middle East, to Iran, transatlantic relations, Cuba, etc. So you can build on previous Council conclusions, and when you deal with this particular subject again, I mean you do small adaptations. Usually that's not difficult. The difficulty is coming once you're dealing with a completely new subject. Like the cartoon issue in 2006, this Danish cartoon...there was no previous Council conclusions, no EU acquis on this particular subject. And if you have to establish an EU consensus on a new subject like the cartoon issue and you are throne between those who are in favour of a speech (?), and the number of MS wishing to apologize essentially, then you have find a middle-ground and this was difficult. And this is something, if we had a cartoon situation today, it would not take the PSC having 2 days of discussion, you would probably take 2 hours. This is one... , the one is... EU enlargement made a difference because suddenly you had new EU MS and certain subjects where some of the EU MS had particular positions because of the domestic situation, because of historical experiences...certain items became more difficult to deal with. But usually after some time everybody would join the mainstream and there's a sort of strong force and willingness from the EU side to have a mainstream position. And if 1 or 2 MS try to stay outside this mainstream, then there must be some very good reasons for them, which must be recognized by the others... that they can prevent the consensus from emerging.

... There's a hierarchy... issues start at working group level, then go to the PSC and then, theoretically it can go to the Coreper still, but that's not too well seen. And then it goes to the Ministers, and ministers will try to sort it out. ...

Q: Are there a lot of issues which are sent to the higher lever?

A: Well, no no, I mean when I was chairman of the PSC we had, I don't remember how many Council conclusions... I mean usually you try to come up with a clean (?), but this doesn't prevent, so with the exception of this cartoon issue where I had one ... in brackets, which went to the Ministers... but usually you manage to have a clean text at the PSC-working group level, but ministers are free, if they find there should be more emphasis here and there, then they're free to change the words. ... The EU is very much about ?... and the small wording... the minister must read what was agreed by the officials because if he tells the press something different than what the 27 had agreed... this is not well seen by the other MS.

Q: And given the need to reach consensus, group dynamic... was it difficult to « apply » your instructions ?

A: Well there are different ways to negotiate; I mean usually you try to stick to your mandate or instructions. If you see you're having difficulties, you can always go back to the capital and say I'm having difficulties getting this done, you tell the chairman I will check with my home capital... put a

reserve on this and this, then you go back you call people back home, if they say no, you should stick to your position, maybe there's a tactical element... you just put it in brackets and the text would go forward and it would there's an Austrian reserve on this and that. But there is some pressure to, obviously, fall in line with the group but you have to verify how strongly your capital feels about it, but it's very dangerous to accept a compromise which is not backed by your capital. Because, you're still in this foot chain and then if it goes to the next hierarchy, your capital may say no we try it again, this was not well done, and they try to correct it in Coreper or among ministers and you would lose, at your level, credibility in the eyes of your colleagues if it breeds a compromise for which you could not carry your capital. So there's a certain dynamic as you put it within the group to compromise, but you must be very careful how far you go. There's small items where you could say ok, I accept this compromise, I mean there are different forms how to negotiate... put it in the text but have a tacit understanding that I may come back next meeting... all sorts of ways and means how you can verify that the compromise will hold.

Q: Meetings of the PSC are twice a week...so I guess you knew well your colleagues?

A: Yeah...usually...

Q: Did you have often informal contacts with them...?

A: Yes obviously between meetings you would call people, but you would see them all the times, at diners, cocktails, so very often.

Q: Were there some MS representatives with whom you had closer relations? Does that depend on personal affinities or...?

A: This sort of committees where everybody has a seat is a sort of equalizer; it doesn't make a big difference whether you're from a big country...it's more a matter of personal chemistry.

Q: CFSP, in general, would you say it's more than a lower common denominator politics, or...?

A: No I think it's more (than lowest common denominator), because what you have, I mean there's this genuine willingness of EU MS to cooperate and to make this whole CFSP work. So there's a certain amount of ambition in it. And you have built in things in the system which make sure that you do not end at the lowest common denominator. "Things" like Solana; he's having an ambitious agenda of its own...so if he has the feeling that the level of ambition is too low, then he would come and say, look... MS must be a little bit more ambitious... we must go a little bit forward. So you have Solana and his people – and he has an important staff – to carry the MS a little bit along, I mean... the danger is...obviously a group of 27 is not in a position to take big initiatives. What they're very good at is to find a compromise...and the push by Solana and his people helps to have this common denominator a little bit higher than it might otherwise be. (Solana came to PSC meetings if he wanted – he could always attend – and you would have breakfast and lunches with Solana...I mean this depends a bit on the presidency, but I think when I was chairman we had this 4 or 5 times.

Q: Now, Haider controversy...

A: Well, I didn't take it personally, I guess... but it was not a problem in terms of interacting with colleagues, because some of them I knew from before...so no problems in terms of talking. Well... I was a little bit careful not to push things and invite people where the danger was they might say no...so yeah I was a little bit careful not to push the envelop, because it's an awkward position also for colleagues. But then I think by September it was over, but I never took this as a personal offence.

Q: What do you think about the resources Austria devotes...?

A: Well, I think...we're doing okay, I mean in the areas where we take an interest, I think we devote enough resources...participations in ESDP missions... You can always do more... undertaking initiatives...

Q: But compared to countries the same size, like Ireland?

A: well, I think it's not the quantity, the number of people which counts, but rather the quality because in each negotiation you have only 5-6 people who make the real decisions. So it doesn't make such a big difference... We are able to cover all the working groups in Brussels, we're doing fine I think.

Q: And concerning neutrality ... is it a problem?

A: No, no...because that's in the accession treaty; we clearly, explicitly stated in the accession treaty that our neutrality will not inhibit our capacity our capability to participate fully in CFSP and ESDP.

Q: Is it still meaningful actually..? Does it still have substance?

A: Not in the EU context because in the EU context we never invoke our status of neutrality.

Q: Concerning this problem between Slovenia and Croatia, does Austria play a mediating role...?

A: No, the mediating is done by Mr. ... from the Commission. We have not been asked by the parties to mediate... we have an opinion but we don't meddle in...

Q: Are there features of the Austrian foreign ministry that have changed with the EU accession?

A: Everything is going much faster, because you have to react much faster, there is no time for reflection; I mean it goes back and forth, it's a constant stream of emails and information going back and forth, so the speed is much higher.

Q: And concerning the style of diplomacy?

A: Well, what you have is a sort of, you have some people, a good number of people who know a little bit about the EU... and you have a number of colleagues who know very little about the EU, how it functions...

Q: Oh, really?

Q: Well, if you haven't worked in Brussels, you have not developed this feeling... So this makes it sometimes a little bit difficult for embassies to see how this Brussels' machinery would work, and if you don't know this you cannot feed in the information and if you don't look... for example if you're in Pakistan and if you're not looking when is the next meeting on Asia, then you cannot provide an input. ...disadvantage because, there's still this bilateral agenda they're working on, but... Essentially, you have a good number of people who know more about the EU than others, let's put it this way.

Q: ...

A: Well, I mean, in the meantime I think it's more or less... some older colleagues for whom... but to a great extent it is. But they may not know how the EU functions and so on but they're reminded every four weeks or so that we are part of the EU, because the EU heads of mission would meet regularly and they have meetings and lunches... so they're constantly reminded they're part of a group.

Entrevue 22

MAE (DG II) 16 juillet

Note : seules les quelques premières minutes enregistrées ; problème technique

Q : How does Austria's membership in the European Union (EU) affect the work of the DG II; what is the importance of CFSP?

A: Well, I should first mention that I'm quite new here, cause I stayed 9 years working with Javier Solana in Brussels, and so I missed what was a crucial time during which things developed here. So what I'll tell you is not based on a long standing here...

Q : ... but since you arrived... ?

A : Definitely. There are 11 divisions in this department ; 7 deal with regional questions, others with horizontal issues... [...] and there are 3 multilateral machines attached to that : the UN, the OSCE and the EU... (fin de l'enregistrement)

Notes :

« There are no aspects » of our foreign Policy in which the EU is not involved... »

Do you communicate often with your European counterparts...?

R: Yes sure. Talk on the phone, emails, political directors' meetings, etc. We usually have an informal lunch at the beginning of each presidency. So we just had one last week.

COREU system: started to be used less... There are more communication through normal emails.

Policy process...

Q : scenario : let's say one MS doesn't consult the others before publicizing its national position on a given issue...

R: well, you know, although CFSP is "common", it is not like agricultural policy; there is no legal/formal requirement to consult. Consultation varies depending the issues; in some areas, there are no problems to act collectively/no reason to act alone (e.g. towards the Honduras coup d'Etat these last weeks, etc.), whereas on some other issues it's more difficult. CFSP is meant to complement national foreign policies, so each MS still has its own foreign policy... Of course, we prefer to be consulted...

...~But the process is there~. There is a willingness to work together, to try to reach consensus; an openness on the part of representatives in Brussels (ex : PSC, etc.); « reflexive need » for consultation/to know what the views of the others are...

Q: Austrian diplomacy in the Balkans: is Austria playing an important role?; does it seek to really influence policies and play an important role?

A: For sure, the Balkans are important for Austria; we have had links and an involvement in this region since a long time; Austrian investments there are very important; we have a lot of Serbians, Albanians, etc. in Austria...

... but for Portugal or Finland, for instance, the Balkans are not really important...

Do you have special relationships with certain MS? And are the relationships with the bigger MS more difficult...?

A: Some MS have closer relationships...for instance, the Nordic countries, who have regular meetings together; the Visegrad countries... Austria is not in any of these groups, but had a certain partnership, together with Slovenia, with the Visegrad group.

1995: EU entry preparations, first years, changes before/after

How was it for you at the beginning? How did you experience the beginnings of the Austrian EU membership?; how did you learn how to operate in the EU framework?;

A: for me, adaptation was not really an issue because I was involved in the negotiations, preparations, etc. For some people, older ones in particular, I think it was more difficult...

Q: Why?

A: Pace of work increased, workload increased, more information ...

Differences brought by membership:

UN context: whereas before (in 1980's and before) we would discuss with different countries out of the EC ("I, for ex., liked to discuss with my Australian counterpart"), now we spend a lot of our times in coordination meetings with the other EU MS.

Q: Desorientation in the 1990's concerning Austria's role/place in Europe/in the world... considering that during the Cold War Austria played the role of mediator? How did it adapt to that?

A: Our neutrality policy and related role of mediator became irrelevant....but not as a result of the EU membership but because of the changes in the international environment. ... Before we would play a role as mediator, now we play a role as part of a group; ...less room for maneuver but what we do is more serious...? "Globalisation" if you want of the Austrian foreign policy.

Q: neutrality, problem?

R: no in the EU context it does not cause any problem. It could eventually if the EU evolved towards a military alliance...

Entretien 23 (Historien)

Université de Vienne, 20 juillet 2009

Note: Entretien non retranscrit.

Entretien 24

MAE (DG V – Politique culturelle), 22 juillet

Q : Of course, cultural policy is not a legislative competence of the EU, but nonetheless, there's the article 1.51 of the treaty that encourages cooperation in that field, so I would like to know to what extent the EU framework affects the work of this department? To what extent is it relevant?

A: You're absolutely right that within the European integration project there are hardly any competences on the EU level and the instrument which there are only instruments which are supposed to be supportive or complementary. This means that in the real work of cultural diplomacy of the EU MS, the EU aspect and common policies traditionally do not play a large part. Austria is of the opinion that this has a negative effect on the integration overall. That means that in general we are always supporting an increase of competences and possibilities for the Commission and for the common structures of the EU in the field of cultural diplomacy. The article 1.51 is still the basis but there is also since 2007 a communication on culture, which is the first time a communication on culture which deals with the question of the relations between cultural policies of MS and foreign policy of the EU and its MS. So this has been an important step, which is now being followed up in all the new programs of the EU, like the Eastern partnership program. Just a few days ago there was a meeting of the cultural affairs committee in Brussels that for instance 3 million euros are devoted to cultural projects over the next years within the Eastern partnership program.

Q: you just mentioned a meeting in Brussels, do you meet often with your European counterparts, the Commission, etc.?

A: Uhh, yes, so the structure of the EU, in the field of culture is a quite complicated one and this has to do with the fact that the definition of culture...is not something that is clearly laid out in the structure of integration; it concerns [several sections of the Commission] and on the side of MS it depends of the legal competences in each MS. For instance, in the case of Austria, all the international cultural relations lie within the frame of the foreign ministry, but this is not the case for the majority of the MS. For the majority it lies with the ministry of culture. In the Austrian case, some aspects also lie with the Ministry of Culture, of Education, etc. So it's a complicated framework. So in the EU framework, in Council meetings there are always officials from different ministries also participating. For me, personally, and for the Cultural department of the foreign ministry, these committees don't play an essential role in our policy shaping or in our everyday work on the practical side of it. Because this is so and because we and other member countries feel there should be an increased common cultural approach to European issues, in 2006 there was a new organization founded by the member countries of the EU, by those organizations which we call national cultural institutes of the MS. This organization is a voluntary network of the national cultural institutes of the EU MS, it's called EUNIC. The whole idea is to try to find venues where common activities in the field of cultural cooperation of the MS can help to support the idea of the European integration and also increase mobility between the MS in the field of culture, and also to portray the EU outside of its borders in a more coherent way also culturally.

Q: Apart from meetings, do you tend to communicate with your counterparts by phone, emails, etc.?

A: Yes, this has become very natural. Most issues are dealt with in a direct way and mostly not through official channels but by mail or by telephone. For Austria at least – there's different intensities of cooperation within the EU – our regional partners, in the Central European area, are certainly those partners with whom we have most direct communications, also on cultural issues. ...We created a framework for cooperation in Central Europe, which has the name Platform Culture Central Europe, and which is part of our political ambitions to work together in the Central European area within the EU. And this network comprises 6 countries, it's Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia and Austria.

... priority areas: Central European partners, the Balkan countries and all MS of the EU.

Q: With Germany, since you share the same language, do you have a special relationship?

A: No, not at all. Actually, one has to say there is a sort of sensitivity still, between Germany and Austria, in the field of cultural relations, for 2 reasons: having the same language and historic ties... there is a sensitivity in cultural policy making and cooperation not to overemphasize the relations with Germany in the Austrian case. And on the other hand, because the self-understanding of Austrian identity is not concentrating on being a German speaking country but on being a Central European country; this changed fundamentally since 1989; since that time we're following this official policy line – every Austrian government follows this line. That means we have special relations with our Central European partners to the East, but we don't have special cultural relationships with Germany. But, within the last few years, the cultural relations have become on a more, I would say on a pragmatic level much better than they used to be and this is a sort of consequence of the fact that the Austrian identity, which really built out after the Second World War, has become such a self-evident factor and this political decision to position Austria in a Central European context, that now we have more cultural relations and a more normal cultural exchange with Germany than we used to have 20 or 30 years ago. We started 2 years ago an annual meeting of our policy officers of Goethe Institute and of the Austrian foreign ministry working in the field of culture.

Q: But with Central European countries too it might be sensitive, no?

A: I did not experience in the practical work, also in the political field, any real resentment regarding such cooperation...that it may look like the resonance of a former Austrian empire. I was myself rather surprised that there is a rather relaxed feeling about it and there is a very professional feeling that if this Central European region wants to position itself, also culturally, within the EU and worldwide, it makes sense to work together as closely as possible and also to make use of common historical traditions as much as possible. And the feeling is that a lot of everyday issues, in the political field, social field and economic field, of these countries are very comparable.

Q: And in the Balkans, since some countries of this region have EU integration prospects, do you do anything to integrate them...?

A: Yes, because we saw a deficit in the European integration regarding the Balkans; they are very much concentrating on some "hard power" issues, security issues, but also the simple adoption of the *acquis communautaire*. And it is our firm conviction that this is not enough for creating the necessary trust in the

European member countries' populations to accept the Balkan countries within the European integration. Therefore, we decided to start the program "Culture matters", which gives priority to projects that will develop with and for the Western Balkan countries the objectives first to make their cultural heritage and cultural life better known in the present-day member countries, and secondly, to sort of re-establish, or help to re-establish also the regional cultural cooperation of the South-East European or Western Balkan countries.

Q: So overall, would you say that this department has been affected (to a significant extent) by European integration since 1995?

A: At the very beginning of Austria's membership, no. But over the years, as the EU itself is developing more towards a cultural project, it also affects our policy work for cultural diplomacy for Austria. And because Austria is among these saying we need more cultural cooperation for the integration, we try to be a sort of, pressing or the motor of the sort of reform of the EU towards more cultural objectives an work.

Q: In 1995 and in the preparatory years for the EU membership, you were in Krakow and then in London; were you affected by the EU membership?

A: In Krakow nor in London I was directly affected by the joining of the EU, with the exception that we used it for image building. Because around the time of the accession, we did a lot of public events and image events, celebrating the fact for instance that there was a positive referendum in Austria for joining the EU; we did that also to show to the Polish population what the reactions are, on their own way to integration, how another country sees that. And in London, I made use of this chance of joining the EU in various cultural events. Possibly the most relevant, I think it was in 1998, was we decided to organize a Central European cultural Festival in London, where we joined hands with the Central Europeans and some South-East European countries to present, for a few weeks, around 200 cultural events on this region and on the role within the European process.

Q: What is your impression of the evolution of the foreign ministry since 1995?

A: Well, there were 2 main consequences: one of them was that the Austrian foreign policy and all the departments became[got] more possibilities in networking and in presenting Austrian foreign policy positions in a broader context. So it was an increase of our possibilities in all fields of foreign policy work. But on the other hand, it was also from the very beginning clear that a lot of sort of national initiatives that traditionally were the major part of foreign policy issues and interests, could not be followed the same way as was traditionally done by foreign ministries but it needed a new form of networking experience if you want to realize your interests finding partners within the member countries of the EU, creating a network of friends and trust and common interests. So this was a real change for all departments. Some departments in the foreign ministry were more involved, certainly those who deal with all the issues where there are competences of the EU, either a sole or shared competence. There it was immediately clear that there was a direct change. Our department, there is hardly any common competence, did feel it only after some years, and also after the changes in the EU, and I think these two departments who mostly felt it later were the Cultural department and Development Cooperation.

Q: Do you feel some division within the ministry like between diplomats like you and the others?

A: Yes, we do have a common corporate design of the foreign ministry, which is important, because we have to follow foreign policy interests and try to realize them, but we do say that we need our specific designs and corporate identities for specific policy areas. And this is very much the case for development cooperation people and for the cultural people. So, this department, which is a general directorate, directly on the same level as all the directorates on for instance European affairs, traditional foreign policy or development cooperation, tries to be working as a – what would you call it, I would call it a sort of "profit center" within the foreign ministry for cultural relations. ... "Profit center" in the sense of acting in a quite autonomous way, as far as... a very practical issue, for instance, we are in this department, it's the only department which has its own budget in the foreign ministry, because otherwise, the dependency on general issues of the ministry would have possibly a lot of formal or informal influence on the way we spend money and create projects. So we have our own budget subdepartment. And with development cooperation, we have our own public affairs' offices and we are also, the cultural department, the only department working in project management regularly. All the things that we do... we deal with project managers in... cultural institutes...

Q: Do Austrian bilateral embassies tend to cooperate often with other EU MS embassies in cultural matters...?

A: Yes, we give clear directives to our embassies and cultural fora, that we have 2 objectives where we want them to cooperate: one of them is the Central European region; they should cooperate on projects

with this Platform Culture Central Europe, with embassies of the other 5 countries; and secondly they should try to be active in this EUNIC organization where we cooperate with all cultural institutes of the EU MS. But this is a general directive, and the development of projects and plans happens mostly...

Q: Does the EU schedule (Council meetings, etc.) impact your work in a certain way?

A: not very often. I have to say that actually the foreign policy forum and security policy issues of the EU have become more important for our issues, for the way we cooperate and make priorities than the cultural meetings of the Council, cultural ministers' meetings. The latter we follow more out of interest what they are doing and developing, but mostly it doesn't have any direct impact on our work.

Entretien 25

Vienne, 28 juillet 2009

Q: When did you start your career?

A: 1958 I think. I started with matters of European integration in 1958 in the Federal Chancellery, because the Federal Chancellery was responsible at that time for European integration...the administration of the Marschall Plan...OECE... So I was in Paris, in Geneva... at the OECE missions, EFTA mission. Came back in Vienna in 1964 and in 1965 I switched to the Foreign ministry.

Q: What was the importance of Europe for the Austrian foreign policy and identity in the 1960's and the 1970's?

A: Well, actually you know, it all leads back to the OECE and the Marschall Plan. We were part, let's say, from the start, of the European cooperation process.... We were occupied until 1965 and then neutral; of course we wanted to be part and included in the Western European cooperation processes. This was a basic political motivation: being included in the European cooperation processes. Being a Western, socially and politically and economically, a Western country, we wanted to remain and participate in their projects. The economic motivation was of course that by far the largest, largest, largest part of our exports to, and imports from, came from Western Europe.

Q: During the Kreisky period...would you say that Europe was less important? Because it seems to me that Austria's foreign policy at that time was primarily focused on the UN...the global scale?

A: No. If somebody tells that, I'm absolutely not of this opinion. Of course we were neutral at the time and hence, not member of any alliance... we were strategically excluded from the military combinations. And also due to our neutrality, it was not possible, because in those days of the Cold War, neutrality and being member of the then EEC and EC was considered incompatible. Because if you were bounded to much, you wouldn't have enough let's say free hands to pursue a strict neutrality policy in case of crisis or war. So that was excluded. And then Austria looked for a certain place in the international...not being member of the EC, a certain place in the international game, and of course that was UN in those days. And Kreisky also in a way calculated...it was a certain mediation position, which we were looking for due to our neutral status, without ever uh...allowing any doubt about what we are socially and politically: a Western democracy, a market economy. That's why... Kreisky was a man with vision and ?...As you know he had his position in the Middle East conflict, and so on. But never ever, would Kreisky have consider minimising or weakening our bond to the, let's say, European economic cooperation and in a certain way integration. That's why we were members of EFTA. And it was Kreisky who pushed very much during his time for closer relationships with the EC... he called an EFTA summit and the topic was "what to do to increase and reinforce the relationship with the then EC". So we should not think that Kreisky ever thought of weakening our position in, as far as we could go, the Western European processes.

Q: When you were ambassador to the EC...

A: ... of course if there's a club somewhere which is also for you very important – and it was always very important for us what this club of the then 9 or the 12 did ... it's always if you want annoying not to be a member of the club (laughs). ... we were always in Austria most, possibly among all EFTA countries... Brussels was always an extremely important point of reference for us; it always was. ...and after all when I was there... we were not members of the club, of course, but we had the free-trade relationship and we were let's call it, very very close; in today's language one might say, a privileged partners of the Union and the doors at which you knocked were always open.

Q: Ok, you had good relationships with them.

A: Yes of course.

Q: But the focus was more on economic matters; were you aware of the political cooperation between the EC members?

A: Yes, yes of course we were very much aware of it you know. And at the very beginning in the 1980's, still it was thought that the beginning of political and security cooperation, which slowly, very slowly began, might be a certain obstacle to move closer to the Union or even into the Union. I mean this was there. But after the fall of the iron curtain, even before for us, Austrians, uh... our thoughts went to creating compatibility. So we of course followed these efforts very closely... we always had sympathy(?) because actually we had always, as a matter of principle, for the reinforcement of the European process.

Q: Ok. When did the application to the EC become part of the political agenda in Austria?

A: You can't put it at a specific date but I would say, going back, I am of the opinion, that Austria would have been a founding member of the European Union had it not been for neutrality reasons which didn't make it possible in those days of the Cold War and the confrontation between East and West. Because don't forget that, let's say, Moscow and its allies considered the EU in a way as just the European basis of the North Atlantic community and treaty; politically, not legally. So one couldn't see a place for a strictly neutral country in this confrontation. But from the start there were voices in Austria saying well, we should ...? Austria alone. We tried already in the 1960's to get an association agreement and we failed, again because of the political circumstances. So we were always pushing...but then I would say, there came, in the 1980's, an important moment, possibly with 2 aspects. First, the political aspect: the political situation between, let's say, East-West and especially between the COMECON and the European Community their relation changed from one of confrontation to cooperation. And this started in the mid-1980's and it was of course the Gorbachev years, the Perestroika and all this. Suddenly, what was unthinkable before, there was mutual recognition, between the Union and also Eastern European countries. Cooperation agreements were concluded on a purely economic... the two spoke to each other. This of course changed politically the whole parameters. Not dramatically from one second to the next. This gave us, and certainly me personally, and I wrote it in my book, personally the idea: we have now room – but it was not only myself, there were also from the Social democrats voices, from the Christian Democrats, voices saying well, shouldn't we now go forward and finally membership. And this took place before the fall of the iron curtain. And in concrete terms, I would say it changed at the turn 1986-1987. When I came back from Brussels at this moment, there was a new government– and I had a very close relationship also to the new foreign minister Mock and we sort of created the idea of...to go beyond pure free-trade and go for full participation in the four freedoms of the internal market. This was I think a qualitative turn. Without saying membership – for years we didn't say membership. And this so-called global approach - full participation in the four freedoms of the internal market – went - I drafted it – in the new government declaration of January 1987. This was a qualitative jump. Led us, in the course of one year, intellectually and conceptually, to go for membership.

Q: Did you have to convince...

A: No, the situation was right... And I must also say that...I came back, no...I came back and forth...elections in november 1986...new government in January 1987... and I once met ?(réécouter)... - I took over the directory for economic and European affairs in the foreign ministry – and I was walking there and I met Vranitzsky, who was the new chancellor. He said well, come to my office one of these days. So I called, I got a rendez-vous – I think it was the 17 of January 1987 – and I hardly sat down and...then he turned to me and said: “Don't you think that, finally, we should be a member of the European Community, with some sort of neutrality reservation?”. ... So there I show you...and that's why it was possible to write down and formulate a global approach, which by the way I mentioned when I made my farewell visit to the ? in fall for the first time, full participation in the internal market. But you see, Vranitzsky (was) already in a group of Social Democrats, not all... like Vranitzky, Androch, Peter Jankowitsch... the idea took shape in those days. So it was right... for Austria it was right, not for the other EFTA countries because they regarded us as traitors to the EFTA... So I would really say that the situation was right to go for more, much more, beyond pure free-trade... and...Austria was, among all the EFTA countries, certainly by far the first to...(seek EC membership)..which is a reflection of the fact that we possibly were the country all the time, politically and psychologically, the closest to European...Brussels' events.

Q: Once the idea was launched to apply for membership, what were your impressions of the reactions of the other MS?

A: They were not all too happy. They were not, I can tell you, it was an uphill battle for us. All these years, 1987-1988-1989 and still after the fall of the iron curtain. Because, they were rather wary and concerned for the enlargement. They were much more hesitant, as far as enlargement is concerned, than they were 10 years later when the Eastern enlargement took place. They much more thought in terms of their institutional integrity... they did not want to take in neutrals, for any neutral countries. Because, don't forget, it was the days of Maastricht, when they started to negotiate a Common foreign and security

policy. In the meantime, we have found out, and it's a certain irony now, that it's a great aspiration and up to these days it remains a great aspiration... (laughs) ~doesn't really deserve the adjective "common", but this is another question. But in those days, they were very... and rather concerned that a neutral, actually the neutrals because after the fall of the iron curtain, the others jumped on the bang wagon (Finland, Sweden...), they might (be) obstacles to the development of the foreign and security policy.

Q: okay. What was done exactly concerning neutrality; you mentioned earlier that there was this idea to put a reservation on the application...; what was the evolution of your (Austria's) position on neutrality?

A: Well, this is a long story; it would deserve a seminar! But, look, it was a development over the years. First of all, before the fall of the iron curtain, we insisted all the time, we insisted all the time (repeated twice) towards Moscow and ?, we will be members but this will not infringe our neutral status. And it was a sort of "dialogue de sourds", you know... This is why Moscow said well, we understand – it was also a changed situation - that you want to be part of the internal market, but how do you consider being a member of this union which is about to devise a Common foreign and security policy. This was their argument and we were saying, no we will do... (this was during the period 1987-1989). Later on, we made a clearer definition, because after the fall... we said to the union – when the negotiations were on the way – no, we promise that we fully participate in the development of this CFSP and at the same time redefine our neutrality. If you like, in a somewhat new fashion... but it's gymnastics of words... and we said 3 things; neutrality means we don't participate in wars; Austria will not be a member of a military alliance; and Austria will not have foreign military basis on its territory. So you see...

Q: It came back to...

A: to the very basis. None of these things... in the Union treaties... the Union is not a military alliance... and nobody is asking us to participate in a war. So, what do you want? This was our position (during the negotiations). And with this position we actually finally made it... there were certain – I would like to add... - the question of over flights, you know. Let's say... oh let's no go into these details... this is all, I would say, diplomatic and international law acrobatics (laughs). But neutrality was defined in a new way with these 3 points: no participation in wars, no military alliance and no military basis on our territory. That's how it went. ...this was an ongoing process. Neutrality played a role until the very end you know. The union, or some MS, wanted more assurances, not only such general ones, you know... But it was all settled, you know. This is a process which lasted over years.

Q: Ok. You were the chief negotiator for Austria's membership. How did you experience these negotiations? How different was it from negotiations you were used to?

A: ..the negos for membership is a specific animal; it is not the normal negotiations of two partners exchanging concessions... Membership negotiations means you have to enter a club with given rules, you know. And that's it, you enter the club, you don't negotiate these rules, you negotiate how to take them on; you may have certain transitional periods, you know... you have to take on the acquis... That's it. We understood it from the start, it was no problem. But the Eastern Europeans didn't understand it at the beginning; they thought they would negotiate something. If I'm oversimplifying it is not "negotiation" in terms of granting mutual concessions and agreeing on mutual concessions; it is how, the way how to enter a given legal institutional ?, which you have to take over as a candidate. Full stop.

Q: Was it difficult to... in your relationships with the government for instance?

A: No, we were so close to these events. Actually... there's no comparison between our negotiations and the ones of the Eastern Europeans, because we were... we have participated in the European processes, even if not as a member, from the start. We had very good economic relations to the EC and industrial free-trade... our economic legislation was already, to a very large extent, harmonized to the EC. All through these decades we were a fully functioning market economy. We were richer than the EC average. We had one problem, we had higher environmental standards than the EC... So, there you see, a completely different situation than the Eastern Europeans. ...

Q: Once you entered the EU, how was it to adapt to the new framework in terms of working practices?

A: This was not ? for us. Our whole administration had worked with Brussels for decades. ...when I was coordinating with the other ministries... all these colleagues they had already gone when we were a third country (pas sure de ces propos) in Brussels in the context of the free-trade arrangements... all the human infrastructure was there. So, it was actually, there are always light problems, you know, until today... and everybody has national administrations. ... we knew each other and when we were shaking hands, everybody said, well, now you're inside! And that's it.

Q: But how different was it than when you were ambassador to the EC some years earlier?

A: Yeah, there is a certain point, you can ask. When I was there in the 1980's (1983 to 1986), my main partner, in the context of where you went and where you solved problems... one was dealing with the Commission; the real point of reference were the Commission services. Your friends, the people you

invited and had good relations with...they were your partners on the other side. ...That, I felt, was a real change. When you come back as a member, you work with Coreper and... you know, Coreper was quite another world; you did not have real professional dealings with the MS' delegations when I was there the first time, all with the Commission; the second time your world was Coreper; of course there's the Commission but this is another institution and we (Coreper) feel that we are in competition (pas sure) with the Commission... the Council takes the decisions and rules the waves; it cooperates with the Commission but the Commission has to propose. ...always irritated by the Commission... So this was a very clear difference.

Q: frequency of meetings...

A: ...it became more and more... but I think the normal frequency was once a week. But it was usually more... yes, a lot of informal meetings...

Q: And what was the dynamic, compared to other multilateral meetings?

A: It was very much, in my days, a club; a club, I must say of gentlemen because there were ladies but there was no permanent representatives. It was very close, because we were very homogenous. Certainly now homogeneity has to a large extent got lost because of the enlargement. ...it is a fact. It was a Western European organization...when you extend borders, new elements come. ... I'm not against enlargement but this is a fact and this has its effects on the functioning...I have great doubts about the future functioning of the Union because it has become so heterogeneous. But it was a club, it was a very homogenous club. And we considered Coreper, we often said to each other, possibly the most integration minded group. Because all of our thinking was, you know, geared to finding common solutions to common problems. This was our task. In spite all our national positions. We very often tried to forget national positions and...not quite in conformity with what our governments wanted from us. It has to be like that, it has to be like that. Because we were really geared to finding solutions to our common problems. And it was by fact of the institution. And I think it was stronger in our field, in the Coreper, than in the Council, different Councils. Because these are the national...ministers...who are under pressure of the national lobbyists...who are much more under pressure of national interests and public opinion. The Coreper members in my days were free; they considered themselves to a large extent free and having this one task, I'll repeat it again: finding common solutions to common problems.

Q: ...

A: We felt a certain autonomy and a certain specific task, and a specific function...which was really in the best sense, the European function.

Q: Did it cause problems with the administration here in Vienna?

A: No, but...that you have to manipulate... This is the game you play, you know.

Q: Would you say then this is a very different game than "normal" diplomacy?

A: It is, in a certain way, yes a different game than normal diplomacy. Because in normal diplomacy you come as a national representative who has got certain national interests than you want to present and represent and possibly get...

Q: So did you feel at some point more a European than an Austrian?

A: Yes, that was certainly... in this period in Coreper. This has certainly been weakened (with the enlargement).

Q: When there were problems to get a consensus, were there common practices...?

A: Yes, well I made the first Austrian presidency in 1998, I chaired Coreper. What you do... When you have a presidency, first of all you forget to a large extent your national interests. Then your task, really – I always like to say, my task when I chaired Coreper was to find compromise among 14, forgetting the 15th. Not for vital questions, but you know... but as such, you're geared to that. And well, it's a permanent negotiating process... And when you chair, possibly you have...it's not the 14 which are at loggerheads with each other, it's 2 or 3, and you speak with them, alone, we can sometimes interrupt a meeting. I remember I once did not stop the meeting until midnight because I wanted a specific solution...and I went out with one, and then with the next and then coming back and then saying let's take half an hour break and then try it again. It's a continuous...of convincing others, of finding formulas which would be acceptable and digestible by everyone. You know, it's always finding common solutions...

Q: ...

A: I had... (mentions his several previous experiences with the EC/EU before being at Coreper; e.g. negos for EEA). So I was quite used to these European multilateral workings.

Q: Within the Coreper, ... closer partners?

A: You are with some closer, but we were only 15...very much on a personal basis. And as I said we were a club, not only the Union, Coreper was a club. We felt, as members of the club, we felt in a certain way

responsible to the club...there was a spirit, as I tried to explain before... it developed out of the function (finding common solutions to common problems) we had.

Q: Overall what would you say has changed in Austrian diplomacy (in terms of practices) with the European integration?

A: It has changed, yes...and this is not only in Brussels...the Permanent mission...It has also changed national administration, because the national administrations are fully integrated in the Brussels' events and developments. Even before...not all ministries, but economic ministries, etc.... were already integrated into the Brussels' process. ... Certainly this integration process has led to close interrelationships between MS administrations; very very close. This is a new aspect that has been brought about by the integration process. More than any other international organizations let's say. The foreign ministries have lost the ~fore! (Laughs)

Q: Ok, so is there a feeling of "lost of prestige" in some way for diplomats in the foreign ministry?

A: ...?

Q: But also considering the fact that before, during the Cold War, Austria had a certain importance in its role of mediator...?

A: yes, you're right. If the others told you that, they are right. Before the integration process (in general) external relations had been a domain in a certain way of monopoly of the foreign ministry. The integration process has weakened this position...Because all the ministries... totally dispersed...

I would like to tell you two things: it happens over years...when I came back to Brussels the second time – we were not yet member, I came for the negotiations (in January 1993)...The Austrian mission was already very big, almost all ministries were there, and I came back ...my deputy said well, there's a problem, this is not acceptable, everybody wants to have its own reporting to its own ministry and so on; all that has to get on my desk. I said no it's over, let it go... I remember, the...from the finance minister said, well, if you don't want me to have my own direct...well I'll go home and telephone the finance ministry. You can't control it anymore! Before the control function was all going via the foreign ministry...external relations were all channelled through the foreign ministry... Now the foreign ministry only has a function as a coordinating ministry... It depends very much on personalities, whether the coordinator is strong; if he's not strong and weak... The ambassador is not longer... In the old days, when I had my first ambassadorial posting, in Africa, the mail came once a week to the embassy. I opened it; this was the rule! ... You see, this monopoly of external relations of the foreign minister, of the ambassador, has gone, is no longer. This is I think a very big change. External relations have been, how can I say...atomised... Second thing, in the old days, the foreign minister was usually the second most important member of the government... Now the second most important is the finance minister. And by the way, another thing, the institution of the European Council has very much undermined the position of the foreign ministers... the dinner of the European Council members is at the exclusion of the foreign ministers. ... This is a clear weakening of their position. ...once my friend the foreign minister Mock said – there were still these sort of tensions between the federal chancellery and the foreign ministry – "it is me foreign relations, me and only me" and I said "I told you that we were...it is now the European Council"...de facto running foreign relations of the Union, which should be something for foreign ministers. All these changes are weakening the foreign ministry...European Council and the dispersion of ...in the context of the broader integration process.

...this is a slow erosion of former lines of competence, of power, of influence. And new lines are establishing themselves. The integration process itself has led to actual structured changes for administrations and also for power relations in the administrations...

Q: Okay. ...

A: ...Brussels is possibly today, and certainly for Austria, the most important position. It's also, by far, the biggest mission, much bigger than Washington, Moscow... It should be taken by people possibly between 50-60, and then they could also get a bilateral post, you know, nice... You have a certain sovereignty after the job in Brussels which might not be liked by your ministry; you don't want to be served by sovereign people.

Q: Finally, what do you think about the European External Action Service, which is foreseen by the Lisbon treaty?

A: Ah, yes, well, if I look at that, I don't belong to the admirers of the Lisbon treaty but this is something else..., the Lisbon treaty won't change things...? ... What we would need is a restrengthening of the supranational...of the Union, and this Lisbon won't bring. Now the EEAS; I mean, I am a bit afraid it will rather be – this is a personal remark, others might not like it at all – some sort of a ~monster...expansive... Because of its composition...

Q: Some people say it will increase efficiency...

A: Which efficiency? This will not lead to what you call a Common foreign and security policy; for that you have to have a common political will and the consensus on strategic... Today what we have (talking about CFSP) is very punctual; you observe events... but it's not a Common foreign policy when we say "we love peace". First (before having a Common external service) there has to be a Common policy... (= "mettre la charrue avant les boeufs"). And what its position (the EEAS) will be beside the national services? ... I think one should remain very modest. And my fear, certainly, is that because there is no real Common foreign policy in the real sense, the way out will be into the bureaucratic monstrosity.

Entretien 26

Vienne, 29 juillet 2009

Q : You worked in Kreisky's cabinet in the 1970's... so I would like to ask you, what was the importance of Europe for Kreisky, in Austria's foreign policy?

A: Well, first of all, you have to see Kreisky as a European politician; he was certainly, by his upbringing, his training, his experience, he was first and foremost a European politician. So his main interest was Europe, the situation in Europe, the situation after the war, the East-West conflict. ... His interest for non-European questions came from his recognition that there are certain threats to European security, stability coming from outside Europe. But his main interest was Europe and finding a good place for Austria in Europe. And his main interest for a long time was of course East-west politics, take part in activities for détente, which was the main subject at the time you know. And secondly to organize Austria's position in Europe, particularly in the process of European integration; the big subject when he was foreign minister and also when he became chancellor; in what way could Austria take part in European integration and he was certainly one who always thought very much how we can organize Austria's place in Europe. And beginning in 1948, Austria joined the OECE, the first organization active in integration...idea of large European free-trade area related to this organization, everything in the direction of integration, and Kreisky was certainly one of the proponents of this idea. But then of course came the European Economic Community, which created a particularly tight integration ensemble...for Austria it was not possible at that moment to go straight into the EEC, because of the East-West situation, you know the rather tenuous relations we had with the Soviet Union. And also the fact that the whole EEC was a very strong cornerstone of the Western alliance... So he was thinking what other ways to get Austria access to European integration... so he was one of the founders of EFTA, together with... But from the start the membership in EFTA was never conceived as a sort of counter-culture to integration; the idea was to create something which could ? with the EC... And in his work as foreign minister and chancellor, he was always heading to this whole idea of a large European free-trade area, which then came true in 1972... So as you can see it (Europe) was certainly one of his principal interests.

Q: quid "idée de grandeur" de Kreisky...?

A: ... At one stage he met the General de Gaulle who said to him: you know, Mr. Kreisky, I think that Austria has a special place in Central and Eastern Europe, you should be a kind of organizing, harmonising, partner or power in this... But this was not one of his ideas. He was very much in a certain sense an Euro-Atlantic politician; he believed in a strong relationship with the US. He spent a lot of time in the US, trying to build a confident relationship between Austria with the US, because at the beginning, when Austria declared its neutrality, there were certain reservations on the side of the Americans; they thought, well, maybe Austria is getting too much on the Soviet ?. So he was very much interested in that dimension, not so much into rebuilding something around the former Austrian Empire.

Q: Ok. But can we say that he really wanted Austria to play an important role, in spite of neutrality...?

A: Yeah... he devised what was then a kind of regional neighbourhood policy, which tried in a bilateral way to create special relationships for instance with Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria... to find out you know, how far can you get in relations with these countries. And this organization here (the Austro-French center) was one of his ideas because he thought and some French politicians, we have to get closer to these countries and find out is there any way to strengthen relations...But not with the idea to create some kind of hegemony.

Q: in the 1970's who were the closest partner countries of Austria?

A: Well in the context of relations with Eastern European countries, it was to some extent France... He was really close to Willy Brandt in Germany; this was a political friendship, they were both social-democrats and they had met in exile in Stockholm during WWII... Another very close partner was Sweden...Kreisky spent 4 years in exile there, so he made friends with many of the leading politicians there... Austria and Sweden were working very closely together at that time.

Q: When you became foreign minister in 1986, was the idea to join the EC already on the agenda?

A: Well, before being foreign minister I had been member of Parliament a few years before and I was amongst those who thought that under certain conditions, Austria could join the EU, which at that time was still anathema to many people; they thought no this is something that is not for a country like Austria. So it took a little while, you know, to convince the public opinion, the political parties, the social partners... But I was always of that opinion. And during my short-term as foreign minister (there was a change in coalition and they wanted absolutely to have the foreign ministry...), the direction was already quite clear, you know, that we would gradually, by building up our relations with the EC, reach a stage where we could then enter as a full member. I remember that I had many discussions in Brussels with the Commission to discuss how we could strengthen relations... I signed an agreement on scientific cooperation; this was small steps but all with this idea that in the end the relations had become so close, that becoming a member would be a kind of natural thing. So this was the strategy at the time, you know. And then when I returned to Parliament, I continued... And the for a second time I was called into the government to be a kind of minister of state for Europe; at that time we had already made the demand for admission and my brief was to prepare the entry of Austria, particularly by convincing the public opinion; at the beginning there was a rather strong resistance against joining the EU because people were sceptical whether or not we could really maintain our specific foreign policy and things like that; so there was a lot of explaining to be done.

Q: Ok. But among the political forces... am I correct or the SPÖ was in general rather reluctant towards European integration?

A: ... you cannot really retrace back reluctance to one specific party or political movement. The resistance was basically the idea you know, that had been generalized, partly also under Kreisky's era, that Austria was something special you know. That in order to maintain this speciality, we should rather go the way of Switzerland, a small island of welfare and not submit to any of these European rules. On the other hand, it was quite clear, from the pattern of our exports and everything, that we had to join the EU, because that was the kind of thing to do. And the resistance for instance came from the farmers... and small companies; so there was a rather large coalition against joining. And so my task was to convince the public that this was a good thing for Austria.

Q: ... quid main factors pushing decision to join?

A: The main factor was economic... exports... our economy was totally dependent on a good flow between Austria and the EC... not being member we had quotas in agriculture... But on the other hand, there was this feeling by many people, and not only from the Social-Democrats, that Austria should maintain its specificity; that we would be dominated by bureaucrats from Brussels... And another argument, strong on the Left, was that many people regarded the EC as a kind of capitalist bloc and that there was no place for progressive/left parties...

Q: When you applied for membership, to what extent were you aware of the political cooperation developing in the EC?

A: Well at that time there existed the European Political Cooperation, but it was not as strong or ambitious as it is today; there were no Mr. Solana, etc. The EU was conceived at the very start as a purely economic thing and politics was added. To this day, if you look at the foreign policy of the EU, it is still very strongly membership-oriented; it is not something that sits in the Commission but in the Council of ministers; so this is a domain reserved for MS... the Common foreign and defence policy is to a large extent... doesn't really exist; every country does what it wants to do, of course with certain respect and regard for the rest of the Community. But at that time it was even less important. But of course, we were quite aware that becoming a member of the EC would mean a certain degree of coordination, certain types of regards to the interests of other members. On the other hand, we had never had a different foreign policy you know. We made at that time statistical accounts of voting patterns in the UN and you could already see that on most occasions Austria voted with members of the EC and was not having a kind of separate foreign policy. So our policy was always very similar to that of the EC members. So we were not afraid this would put limits on our foreign policy.

...Of course nowadays... With great respect to certain rules and ideas that circulate in the EU, our foreign policy was not really affected by the membership in the EU because it was always a European foreign policy you know. (~22min)

Q: UN...

A: ...we had a very specific Austrian view on neutrality. When we adopted neutrality in 1955 – of course we had no idea what it was... - we pretended that we would follow the example of Switzerland but we did not do so for one day because the next thing we did was we joined the UN... We developed from the start a kind of Austrian model of neutrality...we saw it as a different expression for independence. It kept us at

the time independent from the Soviet Union, to some extent also from the US (but Kreisky was a firm advocate of a close relationship with the US... had the highest praise for the Marshall Plan, solidarity of the US people...was very grateful to the US). So this neutrality was of course very strict in a military sense; there was no question of joining a military alliance: NATO, not to speak of the Warsaw pact. But the idea that it would restrain our foreign policy never occurred to us; we assumed our foreign policy. And if for instance we were fighting the Apartheid, this was no question of neutrality, it was a fight for fundamental freedoms and human rights... But you know, it was never a question did neutrality played the slightest role: of course neutrality yes; we would not participate in NATO manoeuvres and in third world wars...but everything else was possible.

Q:...

A: ... we had excellent relations also with the Soviet Union...Soviet leaders came to Vienna...

We were also independent from the US...for instance we had good relations with Cuba.

Q: Did you care about the Soviet Union's reactions to your application for membership?

A: No this was 1989...this is Gorbachev, it was a very different Soviet Union. We made sure before going to Brussels with this letter that there would be no fundamental resistance from the Soviet Union. In the old times, when we were member of EFTA and there were negotiations with the EC, there was always a certain apprehension from the Russians; that this would lead to some kind of military engagement or that for instance we would apply sanctions against the USSR. I myself went to Moscow as a member of Parliament – it must be 1988 or something - and I talked to Anatoli Dobrinin...was a famous Russian ambassador in Washington but at that time was in Moscow... we discussed and he said if you don't join NATO it's okay...the European Union with maintaining your status of neutrality: no objection...you know. So we made sure by many contacts... but Dobrinin was certainly one of those who gave us the feeling that basically the Soviet Union had dropped its old antagonism against the EC. There were even at that time negotiations between Comecon and the EC to establish...

Q: When Austria joined the EU in 1995...

A: I was at the OECD...I left politics in 1993..

Q: Some people mentioned in my previous interviews that there was a certain dichotomy in the foreign ministry towards EU membership, between the economic and political divisions. Do you recall that yourself?

A: I don't recall that... The foreign ministry was hesitant at the beginning. I remember, before I was foreign minister, when I was member of Parliament, I was the first social-democrat, with some political standing you know, who publicly talked about the possibility of joining the EU. I did not say let's do it next year but I said the nature of the EC has changed, it now a much more open and pluralistic thing... East-West relations are showing signs of détente...so we could perhaps consider that. At that time, this was 1984 or 85, there was quite an outcry in the foreign min...no no, we can never do that we have to stay as we are and developed some kind of bilateral relationships with the EC, like today Switzerland... because there was a kind of dogma in the foreign ministry that a neutral country cannot join the EC, because it gives up too much of its sovereignty...the EC could for instance take a decision to boycott trade with the USSR or the Eastern bloc and Austria could never follow such a thing. It never happened in practice you know that the EU went to war with East... Anyway, there was a certain dogmatic position and it took a little while, but then afterwards everybody was enthusiastic...

Q: Ok. In the 1990's, what was done to prepare for membership?

A: Lots of things...The main problem was to absorb the *acquis communautaire*...adapt the Austrian legislation to the various EU rules and of course also to study the working methods of the EU. Because there people who were uh...perhaps familiar with multilateral diplomacy in the UN would find a completely different world in Brussels; Brussels is not New York, you know. So they had to study these working methods, you know and what type of committees, what was expected from a member and things like that. But there were certainly a lot of preparations. ... There was training of people...people in the Commission...

Q: Ok. What are your impressions of the changes EU membership brought for Austrian diplomats, in their practices? You said earlier that Austria's foreign policy was not really affected but what about the practice of diplomacy?

A: Oh for the practice it did a lot of course ...because the problem for a smaller country is that the EU is really time-consuming; you have to go to numerous meetings and committees and things like that. And today you know if somebody makes his career in the foreign office, he has to go through all these stages of...comitology... and it's a particularly hard time during the presidencies because you have to preside something like 600 committees. And you have to get familiar with the working methods of the Union and try to, if you have something special you want the Union to do for us, you have to build networks,

coalitions and things like that, so it's a completely different life-style. And I've always been critical of the fact that, since we became a member of the EU, because this absorb so much of the energy and the time of our diplomacy, we have neglected many other parts of the world! Many parts of the world, people haven't heard from Austria for years because everybody is in Brussels, you know, working in some kind of obscure committee.

