

# Ambitious and Apathic, Principled and Pragmatic: Austrian Foreign Policy in the Second Republic

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## Abstract

This article sets the stage for the subsequent contributions to a forum on the *Handbook on Austrian Foreign Policy (Handbuch Außenpolitik Österreichs, see Senn et al. 2023)*. It first introduces the book's major findings regarding the processes of making and implementing decisions on Austrian foreign policy: the Europeanization of its foreign policy, the multiplication of issue areas and actors, additional demands for coordination, and the fragmentation of strategy-building. The article then addresses the contents of Austria's foreign policy in the Second Republic and identifies security, prosperity and identity as its fundamental goals as well as neutrality, neighbourhood-policy, cultural diplomacy, foreign trade, and the determination to act as "good power"/"good global citizen" as bundles of instruments for achieving these goals. Building on these findings, the article outlines avenues for further research and gives an overview of the subsequent contributions to this forum.

## Keywords

Austria, Second Republic, foreign policy, security policy, research agenda

# Ambitioniert und Apathisch, Prinzipientreu und Pragmatisch: Österreichs Außenpolitik in der Zweiten Republik

## Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel ist der Ausgangspunkt für die Beiträge eines Forums zum Handbuch Außenpolitik Österreichs (Senn et al. 2023). Der Artikel präsentiert zunächst die wesentlichen Befunde des Handbuchs zu den Prozessen der außenpolitischen Entscheidungsfindung und Umsetzung: die Europäisierung der Außenpolitik, die Multiplikation außenpolitischer Themenfelder und Akteure, zusätzlicher Bedarf an Koordination, und die Fragmentierung der Strategie-Entwicklung. Anschließend geht der Artikel auf die Inhalte der Außenpolitik in der Zweiten Republik ein. Er identifiziert Sicherheit, Wohlstand und Identität als fundamentale Ziele der Außenpolitik sowie Neutralität, Nachbarschaftspolitik, Kulturpolitik, Außenhandel und das Bestreben, als "gute Macht"/"good global citizen" zu agieren, als zentrale Instrumente zur Erreichung dieser Ziele. Aufbauend auf den Befunden des Handbuchs skizziert der Artikel schließlich eine Agenda für weitere Forschung und gibt einen kurzen Überblick über die Beiträge des Forums.

## Schlüsselwörter

Österreich, Zweite Republik, Außenpolitik, Sicherheitspolitik, Forschungsagenda

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## 1. Introduction

The long-entrenched understanding of small states as objects rather than actors of world politics (Neumann/Gstöhl 2006, 19) has become more and more challenged by recent scholarship, providing evidence that they can be proactive players as opposed to mere bystanders (e.g. Archer et al. 2014; Jesse 2016). In principle, they have the agency required to promote the development and codification of international law, mediate in conflicts, host international organizations and major conferences, and, more generally, to take on leadership responsibilities in different issue areas of world politics. Austria is certainly a case in point.<sup>1</sup> After regaining full sovereignty in 1955, the foreign policy of the Second Republic has left footprints in many areas of world politics. During the East-West conflict, for example, Austria built bridges to neighbouring countries in the Eastern Bloc and shaped the outcome of the Helsinki Final Act. More recently, it was a leading state in the development of the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW) and hosted the first meeting of the treaty's parties in June 2022. Moreover, Vienna has become a hub of international diplomacy (see also Robertson 2021). It is the seat of international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and has served as the venue for important diplomatic conferences, including those that led to the *Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations* and the *Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties*.

Even though Austria has demonstrated that it can stand taller in world politics than its size would suggest, it certainly does not always manage – or even try – to do so. There has been plenty of variation in the parameters, processes, and contents of its foreign policy over time, especially in the past three decades. Austria is no longer positioned at the frontline between antagonistic great-power blocs but surrounded by member states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), neutral Switzerland and the microstate Liechtenstein. Membership in the European Union (EU), to which Austria acceded in 1995, brought new opportunities and constraints for Austria's foreign policy, and it has confronted a growing complexity of world politics in terms of issue areas, actors, and threats. Domestically, the influence of the Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) on Austrian foreign policy receded and with it the global agenda of its long-term leader Bruno Kreisky. So Austria

has gradually moved away from its global orientation and its ambitions as mediator and bridge-builder, which characterized its foreign policy during the East-West conflict and Kreisky's terms as foreign minister and chancellor, towards a focus on its regional environment and the European Union.

Despite these profound transformations, the interest of political scientists in Austrian foreign policy has faded, and what remains to be written focuses on particular aspects rather than the big picture.<sup>2</sup> This includes Austria's status as a small state (Gebhard 2013; Thorhallsson/Eggertsdóttir 2020), its neutrality (Bischof et al. 2001; Gärtner 2018; Kovács/Wodak 2003), the effects of EU membership on its foreign policy (Müller/Maurer 2016; Sonnleitner 2018; Kramer 2016), and its foreign policy vis-à-vis individual states or regions (e.g. Hödl 2004; Suppan 2009). Yet a comprehensive and systematic analysis of Austria's foreign policy, which complements Michael Gehler's seminal foreign policy history (Gehler 2009a; 2009b), has been missing in the literature so far.<sup>3</sup>

The *Handbook on Austrian Foreign Policy* (Senn et al. 2023) fills this gap. It seeks to spur a more intensive engagement of political scientists and scholars from neighbouring disciplines, including law, sociology, economics and history with this subject, to improve the awareness and knowledge of students and thus to complement existing handbooks and introductions to Austrian politics (Dachs 2006; Gärtner/Hayek 2022; Ucakar et al. 2017), as well as to stimulate and inform much needed public interest and debates on Austrian foreign policy. In order to do so, the book addresses how processes of making and implementing foreign policy decisions have evolved over time; traces how Austria's foreign policy has evolved in different issue areas such as global health, arms control, and human rights as well as vis-à-vis different states, regions, and international organizations; and analyses why key characteristics of its foreign policy in different domains have changed or persisted over time.

This article takes stock of the *Handbook's* findings and sets the stage for a book forum that pursues three goals. First, the forum seeks to make the major findings

<sup>1</sup> For the classification of Austria as a small state see, for example, Thorhallsson and Eggertsdóttir (2020) and Gebhard (2013). For a critical reflection of the small-state category and different indicators of small stateness see Long (2022).

<sup>2</sup> Yet see the review articles by Helmut Kramer (2006; 2016). Beyond political science, the literature on Austrian foreign policy also includes accounts of foreign policy practitioners (e.g. Bielka/Jankowitsch/Thalberg 1983; Cede/Prosl 2015; Hinteregger 2008; Cede/Prosl 2021), legal scholarship that focuses in particular on Austria's neutrality (e.g. Hilpold 2019; Hummer 2007; Neuhold 1981; Öhlinger 2018; Schilchegger 2011; Schreiner 2018) as well as historical studies (e.g. Rathkolb 2006; Röhrlich 2009). On the foreign policy of Austria's First Republic see Binder (2013) and the edition *Außenpolitische Dokumente der Republik Österreich 1918-1938* (Koch et al. 1993 and additional volumes).

<sup>3</sup> Published about four decades ago, the edited volume entitled *Außenpolitik und Demokratie in Österreich* (Kicker et al. 1983) constitutes an early attempt to move towards a comprehensive analysis of Austria's foreign policy.

of the *Handbook* and avenues for further research on Austrian foreign policy available to a broader readership beyond the German-speaking world. Second, it seeks to critically reflect on the goals, structure and contents of the handbook. Third, and most importantly, it seeks to intensify the scholarly interest in Austrian foreign policy and to spark more research on this topic. So, unlike the *Handbook* itself, which addresses a broad readership beyond academia,<sup>4</sup> this forum primarily speaks to an academic audience.

The organization of this paper is as follows: We summarize the *Handbook's* findings on the processes of foreign policy decision-making in Austria, follow up with those on the contents of Austrian foreign policy, move on to sketching an agenda for further research and, finally, briefly introduce the contributions to this forum.

## 2. Processes of Austrian Foreign Policy

Four features characterize the processes of making and implementing foreign policy in Austria: Europeanization, multiplication of issue areas and actors on the international stage, mounting pressures to coordinate in the foreign policy making process, and a fragmentation of strategy-building.

First, the Europeanization of Austrian foreign policy has two dimensions, which the literature on Europeanization refers to as downloading and uploading. Downloading (top-down effects) refers to the impact that the membership in the European Union and its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) has on the foreign policy of member states, whereas uploading (bottom-up effects) denotes the ways and means through which member states can use EU membership to advance their foreign policy interests (Alecú de Flers/Müller 2012, 21–24). As far as downloading is concerned, Austria has adapted its structures and processes of making and implementing foreign policy to EU membership. For example, it has adapted its legal codification and interpretation of neutrality to make it compatible with the participation in the European Union's CFSP, thus moving further towards a differential form of permanent neutrality (Senn 2023). Moreover, the foreign service has shrunk in terms of human resources, financial resources and representations abroad (Sonnleitner 2018; 2023). In the uploading dimension, the picture is more mixed. On the one hand, Austria often finds itself on the receiving side, acting as a "pragmatic bystander" (Müller/Maurer 2016) as a special issue in this journal put it a few years

ago. On the other hand, there are also instances where Austria attempts to work itself through EU (foreign) policy-making structures to amplify its voice. In the realm of justice and home affairs, for instance, Austria pushed for an intensified cooperation on border security and successfully contributed to the securitization of migration (Eder 2023). Or, in the case of Latin America, Austria skilfully made use of the EU framework to look after its national interests, for example, fostering its trade relations, securing the import of agricultural products or strengthening multilateral relations (Mourão Permoser 2023). In addition, Austria at times performs bridge-building tasks, especially within Central Europe, although, overall, there would have been more potential for doing so (Wineroither 2023).

Second, Austrian foreign policy has been shaped by the multiplication of issue areas and actors in international relations. In our days, world politics deals with a range of issue areas that used to be dealt with by domestic politics in the past. This includes fields such as development, human rights, science and technology, migration, environment or health. For a small state, which does not possess the kinds of resources for its foreign policy and diplomacy that great powers do, this proliferation of issue areas is a considerable challenge. At the same time when issue areas multiplied, more and more actors came to populate the international stage, ranging from multinational corporations to transnational advocacy groups and sub-national actors such as cities and provinces to experts. Austria's approach to this challenge – similar to other small states and medium powers – has often been to occupy niches that other powers overlook and to craft innovative solutions, for example in humanitarian arms control (Kmentt 2023; Kornprobst/Senn 2017). This niche also shows that Austrian diplomacy, working with transnational advocacy groups, is at times rather innovative and does adapt to our times in which the diplomatic stage is no longer occupied by state representatives only. Sub-state actors, too, have become increasingly vocal. Austria's federal provinces are engaging in bilateral relations with neighbouring provinces and in the context of European regions such as the European Region Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino (Bußjäger 2023). Although the Austrian Parliament has become more pro-active in recent years in terms of inter-parliamentary cooperation and parliamentary diplomacy (Stavridis/Jančić 2017), it is rarely used as a forum for meaningful debates on Austrian foreign policy (Heinisch/Konrath 2023). This is underwritten by a widespread disinterest in foreign policy matters in the public. Media interest, too, is limited (Moser 2023) and even scholarly interest in researching and teaching Austrian foreign policy lags behind many other countries (Brix 2023).

Third, Austrian practices of coordinating the doings of different foreign policy actors do not keep

<sup>4</sup> To make the handbook available to a broad readership, all of its chapters are available in open-access format at <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-37274-3>.

pace with the increasingly pluricentric environment in which they operate. Although there is a multiplication of issue areas and actors, the frame for coordinating across these areas and actors has actually decreased over time. As Raoul Kneucker (2023) points out in the book, the legal framework for coordination was done away with in 2000. Until then, the respective ministries were responsible for coordinating foreign policy in their realm. Hence, for example, the Ministry of Finance was in charge of budgetary questions, the Ministry of Science and education was responsible for research policy. Since then, the Office of the Federal Chancellor took over these tasks or delegated it to ad hoc groups. In the realm of foreign policy-making, therefore, there is no institutionalized coordination but mere ad hoc coordination across different ministries and agencies in Austria.

Finally, foreign policy-making and implementation processes are characterized by a fragmentation of strategy-building. There are a number of strategies for different parts of Austria's foreign policy (a strategy on security policy of 2013, on defence policy of 2014, on foreign trade of 2018, and on foreign cultural relations of 2020) as well as intentions to revise existing and draft new strategies on Austrian foreign policy, for example for Asia and Africa. Yet there is no overarching grand strategy (Gaddis 2018; Wivel 2021) that could serve as guiding frame for Austrian foreign policy. This amounts to a considerable problem for any state, small states very much included. Without such an overarching strategic document, any state risks, in Michael Mann's (2012, 88) words, to be an "institutional mess" in its foreign policy-making and implementation because the many different actors and bureaucratic units making up the state, mildly put, are not necessarily always headed into the same direction.<sup>5</sup> This is all the more important in our times because of the above-mentioned proliferation of issue areas in world politics and the pluricentric nature of the Austrian foreign policy process. Grand strategizing would allow for systematically considering priorities, opportunities and constraints, and thus for making foreign policy more efficient, coherent and effective. This is particularly relevant for small states like Austria which only have more limited resources for the conduct of foreign policy at their disposal.

### 3. Contents of Austrian Foreign Policy

Besides the four features that characterize the foreign policy process, the chapters of the *Handbook* show that Austria pursues three primary foreign policy goals: security, prosperity and self-identification. In order to reach these goals, it relies on five sets of mechanism or pillars of foreign policy: i) neutrality, ii) neighbourhood policy, iii) foreign trade diplomacy, iv) cultural diplomacy and v) what may be referred to as "good power" (Neumann/Cavalho 2016) or "good global citizenship" (Abbondanza 2021, 180-182).

These primary goals are rather similar to many other states, including those that are not small powers. Foundational documents of foreign policy put security and prosperity ahead of other goals of foreign policy (Deibel 2007, 125-128). But there are also aspects that are different from most states. This applies especially to patterns of identification. The dominant strand of identification does not glorify the past. On the contrary, since regaining sovereignty in the 1950s, Austrian foreign policy has enacted and developed a particular image of national identity that has evolved very much in juxtaposition to Austria's role in two world wars, the collapse of the first republic and the horrors of national socialism. Up to a point at least, Austria's past self is an important 'Other' for today's Austria. Furthermore, the three goals are intricately linked to particular pillars of foreign policy content, and some of these pillars – and their dominant representations – add up to a distinct Austrian foreign policy.

As far as the pillars of Austrian foreign policy are concerned, the first and most fundamental of these pillars is neutrality (Senn 2023; Roithner 2023). The interpretation of this pillar has always been contested and, over time, it has come to be reconceptualized; critics would say that it has become diluted, proponents would counter that it has become adapted to different international eras and realities. Despite the profound transformation from an integral neutrality to an increasingly differential and de-politicized neutrality (Senn 2023), the status as neutral state has remained an important pillar of its foreign policy. Russia's war of aggression against the Ukraine is an interesting indicator for this. While Finland and Sweden, two European states with a long tradition of standing in between international blocs, quickly came to push for NATO membership, Austria remains strongly committed to its neutral status, both at the level of the political elites and of the public. On the one hand, support for neutrality is still strong, because it has been an important part of Austria's post war national identity. On the other hand, its abrogation would require a two-thirds majority in the National Council. This is a significant hurdle in view of the ongoing

<sup>5</sup> See for example the grand strategizing of Switzerland which consists of three tiers of strategies. Building on the foundational document "Switzerland's 2028 Foreign Policy Vision (AVIS28)", the federal council issues i) foreign policy strategies for legislative periods as well as ii) more focused geographic and thematic concepts and iii) operational concepts. For more details see <https://www.eda.admin.ch/eda/en/dfa/foreign-policy/implementing-foreign-policy.html>.

fragmentation and polarization of the Austria's party system (Helms et al. 2019).

The second pillar is bilateral and multilateral neighbourhood policy (Höll 2023; Pallaver 2023; Wineroither 2023; Jandl 2023; Zellner 2023). During the Cold War, strongly supporting and facilitating the making of the Helsinki Final Act was as much a manifestation of this policy as developing the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) into the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) after the end of the Cold War, including housing the newly formed organization in the city centre of Vienna (in close proximity to the Foreign Ministry and the Chancellery). Austria's keen interest in the Balkans, including its role in stabilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina and in advocating EU membership for Balkan states is to be seen in this context, too. Yet, expectations about Austria's bridge-building role have at times been disappointed, as David Wineroither (2023) cautions in his article on Austria's relations to its eastern neighbours. Although Austria promoted the EU accession process of its eastern neighbours, it did not succeed in establishing formats of regional cooperation or regional coordination within the European Union. Overall, then, Austria was at time more effective and resolved in performing the role of a bridge-builder than at others.

Given that Austria is a very small market economy, the third pillar of its foreign policy is foreign trade (Lechner/Martinz 2023). Economic diplomacy has its own strategy document (a new one is in the making), diplomats posted abroad are very active in this field, and, in addition to its network of embassies, Austria has a large network of foreign trade centres (Außenwirtschafts Center) at its disposal. Although these trade centres officially belong to the Chamber of Commerce, they play a decisive role in Austria's economic diplomacy. Indeed, the number of diplomatic representations and trade centres is about the same<sup>6</sup>, and, of course, embassies are also very active in the field of economic diplomacy. In addition to traditional bilateral economic diplomacy, there is also the multilateral one. This has become increasingly important since Austria's accession to the EU because trade policies are integrated. Austria, to a considerable extent, therefore, has to work its way through Brussels in order to uphold its economic interests within the common market and globally.

The fourth pillar is cultural diplomacy (Auslandskulturpolitik) (Brix 2013; Stadler 2023). Again, there is a strategic document, there is a global network that supports cultural diplomacy, and with Helga Rabl-Stadler, the former president of the Salzburg Festival,

there is even a special envoy for cultural diplomacy. The global network includes cultural fora, language institutes and libraries. Some aspects of cultural diplomacy are distinctly ideational in nature. They are linked to Austria's self-understanding as a "cultural nation" (Kulturnation) or interpretations of cultural spaces around Austria, such as Central Europe. Others are much more tangible in nature, say advertising the country in order to foster the tourism industry. This way, there are linkages between cultural and economic diplomacy. This fourth pillar, too, has experienced some noticeable ups and down. As Stadler (2023) outlines in this contribution to the *Handbook*, cultural diplomacy has been repeatedly affected by budget cuts.

The fifth and final pillar is Austria's determination to act as a "good power" or "good international citizen" by supporting the rule of law and multilateralism in international politics. When it comes to the rule of law, Austria puts emphasis on human rights, especially the rights of children, women and minorities (e.g. Gintsberger et al. 2023; Rosenberger 2023; Werther-Pietsch 2023). Very much in line with this focus on human rights, Austria plays an active role in humanitarian arms control (Kmentt 2023). When it comes to the multilateralism, it has played an active role in international organizations, for example as member in the Security Council (1973-1974, 1991-1992, 2009-2010) and the Human Rights Council (2011-2014, 2019-2021), as chair of the OSCE (2000, 2017) and as major contributing nation for UN peacekeeping operations. Equally important, Austria hosts more than 60 international organizations. Among other things, it is, along with New York, Geneva and Nairobi, one of the seats of the United Nations (Troy 2023).

These five pillars are not always free of friction. Austrian foreign policy oscillates between being principled and pragmatic. Determination to act as "good power", for instance, at times comes to be qualified by economic interests or becomes the victim of politicization processes. Pointing out human rights abuses in other countries can be economically costly (Cede/Mangott 2023; Harrer 2023). A similarly pragmatic attitude often prevails when it comes to the implementation of international human rights instruments or even to agreeing to soft multilateral documents, such as the Global Compact on Migration (Gebrewold 2023; Obrovsky 2023; Rosenberger 2023). Equally important, Austrian foreign policy can also be depicted on a spectrum from ambitious to apathic. The ups and downs that foreign policy experienced in all these pillars tells volumes about it. In the *Handbook*, several chapters, perhaps especially the one on security (Eder 2023) and relations with Germany and Switzerland (Höll 2023), show this variation of active and passive predispositions, depending on what is discussed and

<sup>6</sup> 101 diplomatic representations (including embassies, missions to international organizations, general consulates, and cultural forums; see Bundesministerium für europäische und internationale Angelegenheiten 2019, 237) and around 100 foreign trade centres.

who the decision-makers on the Austrian side at a particular moment in time are.

#### 4. Avenues for Future Research

Building on these findings of the *Handbook* on processes and contents of Austrian foreign policy, we identify six avenues for future research. In our view, scholars should delve into the pluricentric nature of the foreign policy by focusing on i) the process of foreign policy and ii) the characteristics and impact of actor groupings and individual actors in this process. Furthermore, scholars should investigate iii) the foreign policy attitudes and literacy of the Austrian population, iv) the relationship between the five pillars of Austria's foreign policy, v) its use of supra- and international institutions as amplifiers of foreign policy, and vi) its national role conceptions in the realm of foreign policy.

A first avenue for future research pertains to the pluricentric character of the foreign policy process, which involves a plethora of actors beyond the President, the Chancellor, and the Foreign Ministry. Scholars should seek to understand better when and how further actors such as the Ministry of Interior or the Ministry of Health have entered the arena of foreign policy-making and with what effects. An example is the increasing influence of the Ministry of the Interior in the realm of (inter)national security and its respective competition with the Ministry of Defence (Eder 2023). In addition to relations between actors at the federal level, scholars should also address relations between different levels of foreign policy activities, that is, between the federal level, the provincial level and even the local/municipal level. This avenue of research can link the case of Austria to the broader research agenda on the "state transformation" (Hameiri et al. 2019), that is, the "processes of fragmentation, decentralisation and internationalisation of state apparatuses" (Hameiri et al. 2019, 1397) in foreign policymaking.

A second avenue of future research is about zooming on actor groupings and individual actors within the pluricentric foreign policy process. There is, for example, the question of how the integration of a junior coalition partner such as the Green Party or the right-wing populist Freedom Party has affected Austrian foreign policy in the issue areas of human rights, migration, environment, or international security. The role of Parliament, including the rise of interparliamentary institutions such as the Parliamentary Assemblies of NATO or OSCE (Sabic 2008; Schimmelfennig 2020), should be studied in much further depth. As for foreign policy analysis more generally, the influence of interest groups (Foyle/Van Belle 2010) should be studied thoroughly. Additionally, the impact of Austrian

corporatism, including the role of the Economic Chamber (Wirtschaftskammer), and the Chamber of Labour (Arbeiterkammer) but also trade unions and the Chamber of Agriculture (Landwirtschaftskammer) should be scrutinized. The same applies to the impact of advocacy networks. As research on Austria's activities in the realm of arms control suggests (Kmentt 2023; Maitre/Lévy 2019), Austrian civil society advocates can occupy prominent roles in transnational social movements. Moreover, Foreign Policy Analysis has long focused on the influence of individual decision-makers on foreign policy formation. For Austria, there is predominantly research on Bruno Kreisky (e.g. Röhrlich 2009) but many other individuals would warrant further analysis.<sup>7</sup> This includes the question whether and how female decision-makers, in particular female foreign or defence ministers (Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Ursula Plassnik, Karin Kneissl, Klaudia Tanner), have made a difference for the processes and contents of foreign policy.

A third and important avenue for future research pertains to the public. Unlike in many other countries, including Switzerland<sup>8</sup>, there is no continuous survey research on public attitudes and preferences regarding foreign and security policy (except for occasional surveys by media or political organizations). This research would allow scholars to draw comparisons to other countries and observe public opinion (and its reaction to events) over time. In addition, it would enable policy-makers to make informed decisions and to better align policies with societal preferences. In this context, it would also be worthwhile to inquire into the foreign policy literacy of the Austrian population, that is, the population's knowledge about the country's regional and global environment as well as its foreign policy (see, for example, Council on Foreign Relations 2016; Pew Research Center 2022). This avenue of research should also include work on the factors that influence the foreign policy literacy (Bathelt et al. 2016) as well as on how knowledge about world politics and foreign policy is conveyed in the Austrian school system<sup>9</sup>.

The relationship between the five pillars of Austria's foreign policy is a fourth avenue for future research. As a previous section briefly outlined, the five pillars of Austrian foreign policy are anything but hermetically sealed from one another. While pillars can mutually

<sup>7</sup> See, however, Höll (2009) on Wolfgang Schüssel as well as Eichtinger and Wohnout (2012) on Alois Mock.

<sup>8</sup> In Switzerland, the Center for Security Studies (CSS) and the Military Academy at the ETH Zurich conduct annual surveys on public opinion regarding foreign, security and defence policy; see Szvirsev Tresch et al. (2021).

<sup>9</sup> A dissertation by Martina Schallom (1989) addresses school-level education on foreign policy and international relations in Austria. To the best of our knowledge, this is the most comprehensive study on this issue to date.

strengthen one another in certain circumstances, they can also clash in others. When they clash, how does policy proceed? Do decision-makers seek to find a balance between them or put one ahead of the other? If so, which one? The “good power” and economic diplomacy, for example, cannot always be reconciled easily. Neutrality, too, is not always confluent with “good power” and economic diplomacy. Just consider the case of the Ukraine. On the one hand, there are very good reasons for Austria to be as outspoken about Russia’s war of aggression as many NATO states are. On the other hand, there is neutrality and there are also very real economic costs associated with fully participating in sanctions against Russia.

A fifth avenue of research should address the question of how Austria uses its membership in supra- and international organizations to amplify its influence in the world. Research into this question could, above all, look at the EU, drawing a distinction between supranational foreign policy aspects such as trade and finance on the one hand and intergovernmental ones, including matters of peace and war on the other. How does Austria make use of EU arenas in order to push for its positions globally and with what effect does it do so? This avenue of research could also extend beyond the European Union and address how Austria uses other international organizations such as the UN or the OSCE (see, for example, Mosser 2001; Thorhallsson 2012). In addition, future research should focus on how Austria operates within informal groupings such as the “Group of Friends of the Rule of Law” within the UN and how it uses these groupings to advance its interests and standing in international relations (see, for example Bassiri et al. 2020; Prantl 2005). Currently, our knowledge for answering these kinds of questions is still very limited.

A final avenue for research should address Austria’s national role conceptions in the realm of foreign policy. Role conceptions are shared perceptions about how a state should position itself and act in world politics (Harnisch et al. 2011). German foreign policy, for example, has followed the role conception of a “civilian power” (Maull 2014), whereas Austria has traditionally perceived and positioned itself as neutral bridge-builder, cultural power, and good power in world politics. Future research should inquire into how foreign policy role concepts have evolved in the course of the Second Republic and, in particular, when and how they have become contested (see Brummer/Thies 2015). Moreover, it would be desirable for further research to analyse the extent to which Austria’s role conceptions have been accepted or challenged by other states.

## 5. Conclusion and Outlook

This forum on the *Handbook of Austrian Foreign Policy* is a call for scholars in Austria and abroad to engage more intensively with the issue of Austrian foreign policy. In Austria, a certain internationalization of political science has taken place from the late 1990s onwards, both in terms of its publications and in terms of its members (Ennser-Jedenastik et al. 2018, 34-35). This is to be welcomed in many ways, but it has come at the expense of interest in Austrian foreign policy. However, doing research on broader questions of (world) politics and on Austrian foreign policy should, of course, not be a contradiction. As Ennser-Jedenastik et al. (2018, 35) rightfully note in this context: “Those who not only work in Austria but also on Austria need to think carefully about what research on this particular case can contribute to answering big questions. Certainly, developing an international and comparative perspective is all the more important”. In the same vein, scholars outside Austria would benefit from integrating the case of Austria into broader research agendas such as ones on the impact of a party-system fragmentation on foreign policy (Helms et al. 2019; Oppermann/Spencer 2018), on the foreign policy of populist parties (Destradi et al. 2021), on the para-diplomacy of municipalities and federal provinces (Tavares 2016), or on the foreign policy strategies of small states (Thorhallsson 2018; Long 2022).

To spur the debate of political scientists and scholars in neighbouring disciplines on Austrian foreign policy, this forum brings together five articles by scholars with different research interests and perspectives on the issue. A first article by Teresa Reiter (2022) focuses on the issue of public information and education on Austrian foreign policy. The article raises the important point that while it is necessary to gain a better understanding of public attitudes and preferences on foreign policy, it is not enough. Future research also needs to shed light on the attitudes and preferences of foreign-policy practitioners as well as on where and how they develop their understandings of Austrian foreign policy and world politics in general. A second article by Patrick Müller (Vienna School of International Studies; see Müller 2022) zooms in on the Europeanization of Austrian foreign policy. It suggests that future studies should also address the issues such as the trends towards a De-Europeanization of foreign-policy or policy coordination in view of cross-cutting issues (e.g. in the case of the “security-trade” nexus). A third article by Cornelia Baciu (University of Copenhagen; see Baciu 2022) addresses the endurance of permanent neutrality in Austria. The article points to the relevance of collective memory as an explanatory variable and

outlines an agenda for research that focuses on practices of (re)interpretation.

The two other articles of the forum approach different aspects of Austria's foreign in a comparative perspective. An article by Thomas Bernauer (2022) outlines similarities and differences between Swiss and Austrian foreign policy. In addition, it introduces a set of causal hypotheses on the foreign policy of small states and sketches pathways for quantitative research on these hypotheses. Finally, an article by Baldur Thorhallsson and Thomas Stude Vidal (University of Iceland; see Thorhallsson/Stude Vidal 2022) compares the campaigns of Austria and Iceland for non-permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council. The article outlines the motivations of the two states for seeking membership in this body as well as factors that explain Austria's success and Iceland's failure in achieving it. More broadly it highlights the necessity to engage more systematically with the question of when and how small states succeed in getting a seat at the tables of world politics.

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