"THE AUSTRIAN LINK TO THE UNITED NATIONS"

UNA-AUSTRIA was founded in 1945 under the auspices of the then Austrian Federal President, Karl Renner, the Federal Chancellor, Leopold Figl and the Mayor of Vienna, Theodor Körner as well as numerous prominent supporters from public life to spread the ideas of the United Nations in Austria. From 1992 to 2007 former UN Secretary General (1972 to 1982) Kurt Waldheim was the head of UNA-AUSTRIA.

In December 2008 the organization was re-structured. Since that time UNA-AUSTRIA is the general platform for all international issues including Austrian foreign policy and European affairs. UNA-AUSTRIA today is headed by the former Federal Chancellor of Austria, Wolfgang Schüssel.

As an independent, non-partisan and non-profit organization, UNA-AUSTRIA finds its mission in informing the Austrian public about the goals and achievements of foreign policy and the United Nations and is thereby increasing the awareness about international relations as well as deepening the understanding for current affairs in foreign, economic, development and cultural policy fields. UNA-AUSTRIA sees itself as a link to the Austrian Foreign Ministry and the United Nations.

In order to put special emphasis on youth, the United Nations Youth and Student Association of Austria - Academic Forum for Foreign Affairs (UNYSA-AUSTRIA-AFA), whose predecessor organizations date back to the 20s of the 20th century, was founded as an independent organization in 1991. AFA is addressing young people, students and young graduates.

ORGANIZED EVENTS

UNA-AUSTRIA organizes events such as presentations and discussions with important personalities in the area of politics, diplomacy, economics and other sciences.

INTERNATIONAL CLUB

Most of the events take place in the frame of the "International Club" every Wednesday at 12:00 at the Imperial Palace Vienna. Guest speakers give lectures on international issues, followed by a discussion with the audience. Participants can also read international newspapers throughout the opening hours of the club (Wednesdays 11.00am to 15.00pm), have interesting conversations and cultivate their contacts.

LUNCHES and COOPERATIONS

In addition, UNA-AUSTRIA invites to lunches with members of the Austrian Government and cooperates with other institutions such as the Austrian Parliament or the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.
FOREIGN POLICY TALKS AT HERNSTEIN CASTLE

Since 1967, each autumn the "Foreign Policy Talks" take place at Hernstein Castle in Lower Austria (about one hour’s drive from Vienna). This one and a half day event is organized in co-operation with the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, co-operations with other partners are welcome. Each year, the Talks are dedicated to one particular topic of significance to Austrian foreign policy and offer an unique opportunity for an open and informal exchange of ideas at high level. Participants include personalities and experts in the area of politics, economics, finance and culture, as well as Austrian diplomats and private persons with a particular interest in the subject matter.

VIENNA INTERNATIONAL MODEL UNITED NATIONS (VIMUN)

Since 1995, AFA is organizing its annual conference - the Vienna International Model United Nations (VIMUN), an UN simulation conference for students and young graduates from all over the world. The conference is taking place at the United Nations Office at Vienna and is today one of the largest international youth gatherings in Austria.

PUBLICATIONS

UNA-AUSTRIA together with AFA publishes the magazine GLOBAL VIEW on a quarterly basis. With approx. 6000 copies four times a year it is a well-known magazine among the "foreign policy establishment" in Austria.

UNA-AUSTRIA also co-operates with the magazine "SOCIETY" and regularly issues an e-mail newsletter informing on UN and foreign policy issues.

WORLD FEDERATION OF UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATIONS (WFUNA)

UNA-AUSTRIA is a founding member of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA), which is the umbrella organization of about 100 UN Associations worldwide.

As an international non-governmental organization, WFUNA is in the privileged position of having obtained consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. Representatives of UNA-AUSTRIA have the opportunity to participate at international conferences as NGO observers.

MEMBERSHIP

Although the participation at most of the events is free of charge, UNA-AUSTRIA cordially invites all persons interested in international issues to be part of this network supporting the idea of the United Nations, by applying for a membership (annual fee 35.- Euro).

CONTACT

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UNA Austria: Recent and Planned Activities

Activities November 2012 - March 2013

During the past five months, the United Nations Association of Austria (UNA Austria) continued its successful programme with some 30 lectures, seminars and informal discussions with key international and local experts. During the same period, its Youth and Student Association (UNYSA) carried out more than 200 events in its debating and business negotiations clubs in Graz, Innsbruck, Klagenfurt, Linz, Salzburg and Vienna, and its Global Advancement Programme - a study course on international relations for committed students. It also participated actively in several local and international Model UN events.

Highlights of recent UNA Austria activities included participation in the 40th Plenary Assembly of WFUNA in Rio de Janeiro (6-10 November), a lecture by Austrian Vice Chancellor and ForMin Michael Spindelegger on “Austrian Foreign Policy” (26 November, Austrian Parliament), a lecture by IAEA Director-General Yukiya Amano on “Atoms for Peace” (16 January), a discussion with UN Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information, Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal on “The United Nations in your Daily Life” (25 February), and a lecture by the former Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Igor Ivanov, on “Russian International Affairs” (27 March).

Other meetings dealt with the role of the European Union in the United Nations, the US elections, Syria, the role of women in Libya, China, South East Europe, the geopolitical implications of conflicts in the Arab world, the political and economic situation in Slovenia, challenges of the energy switch, transatlantic relations, the Munich Security Conference, and the presentation of the European Foreign Policy Scorecard 2013.

Activities Planned for April – August 2013

UNA Austria will continue its weekly lunch-time events at its International Club. Major activities planned for the next five months include the preparation of a meeting of European UNAs (8-9 April) at the Vienna International Centre (VIC), as well as lectures by the President of the Constitutional Court of Slovenia, Ernest Petritsch on “The Right to Self-Determination” (10 April), Ambassador Albert Rohan on “The Role of the UN Secretary-General” (25 April), the former Federal Chancellor of Germany, Gerhard Schröder (15 May), and the President of the EU-LAC Foundation and former Austrian ForMin Benita Ferrero-Waldner on “Relations between the EU and the Latin American and Caribbean Countries (29 May).

UNYSA will continue its broad programme for students and young academics in five Austrian University cities with an expected number of some 200 events. An international Model UN Workshop will be organized in close cooperation with the UN Department for Public Information from 8-11 July at the VIC. From 11-15 August, also at the VIC, the Vienna International Model UN (VIMUN) will bring together some 250 students from more than 40 countries for a lively simulation game on priority themes of and pressing challenges to the United Nations.

In cooperation with UNA Austria, UNYSA publishes the quarterly magazine “Global View” which is supplemented by UNA Austria’s bi-monthly Newsletter covering highlights of UN developments, Austrian foreign policy issues and WFUNA news.