

INDIA-AUSTRIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

Historical foundations:

Diplomatic relations between India and Austria were established on 10 November 1949.

High Level Visits

2. President K.R. Narayanan paid the first State Visit from India to Austria in November 1999. This was reciprocated by the Austrian President, Dr. Heinz Fischer, in February 2005.

3. President Pratibha Devisingh Patil paid a State visit to Austria from October 4-7, 2011.

4. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Austria in 1983. This was reciprocated by Austrian Chancellor Fred Sinowatz in 1984.

5. Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern met Hon'ble Prime Minister for a bilateral meeting in St. Petersburg on 2nd June 2017 on the side lines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

6. Hon'ble Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with President H.E. Dr. Alexander Van der Bellen on 26 May 2020.

7. Prime Minister met then Austrian Chancellor, H.E. Mr. Alexander Schallenberg on 30 October 2021, on the sidelines of COP-26 In Glasgow.

Recent Ministerial level engagements and visits

8. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Austria from 31 December 2022 to 03 January 2023.

9. Austrian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Schallenberg visited India from 19-21 March 2022. In 2022, the two Foreign Ministers have also met in Munich on 18 February 2022, in Bratislava on 02nd June 2022, on the sidelines of the GLOBSEC Forum, in New York on 20 September 2022 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. In 2023 the two foreign Ministers also met on the sidelines of EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial forum held in Stockholm and of 78th Session of UNGA in New York.

10. Austrian Foreign Minister Dr. Karin Kneissl visited India from 25-26 February 2019 to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Austria.

Other Ministerial level visits

11. Austrian Vice Chancellor Mr. Josef Pröll and Minister of Economy Dr. Reinhold Mitterlehner visited India from 17-20 February 2010.

12. Austrian Federal Minister for Transport, Innovation and Technology, Ms. Doris Bures visited India from 1-4 October 2012. Austrian Federal Minister for Environment, Forestry, Agriculture and Water Management, Nikolaus Berlakovich visited India from 16-19 October 2012 to attend a meeting of Conference of State Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity held in Hyderabad.

13. Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, H.E. Vayalar Ravi, visited Austria from 3-4 February 2013 at the invitation from Austrian Minister for Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, H.E. Mr. Rudolf Hundstorfer.

14. Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Preneet Kaur led the Indian delegation at the 5th Global Forum of United Nations Summit of Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) held in Vienna in February 2013. Indian Minister of Culture Chandresh Kumari visited Austria in April 2013. Dr. Reinhold Lopatka, State Secretary in the Austrian Foreign Ministry led the delegation to India on 11-12 November 2013 to attend the 11th Asia-Europe Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM-FMM) in New Delhi.

15. Gen (retd.) V.K. Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Vienna in November 2014 to attend the UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Counties (LLDC). Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendhra Pradhan visited Vienna in June 2015 to attend the 6th OPEC seminar.

16. Minister of State (I/C) for Power, Coal, New & Renewable Energy and Mines, Shri. Piyush Goyal, visited Vienna in May 2017 to participate in the Vienna Energy Forum. Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendhra Pradhan visited Vienna in May 2017 for the second India-OPEC dialogue. Sh. Pradhan led the Indian delegation to participate in the 7th OPEC International Seminar held in Vienna from 19-20 June 2018.

17. Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shri Nitin Gadkari visited Austria to participate in INTERALPIN 2023 Fair in Innsbruck at the invitation

of Ms. Leonore Gewessler, Minister of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology from 18-21 April 2023.

18. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri visited Vienna for India-OPEC dialogue on 08-09 November 2023. He also had meeting with Mr. Haitham Al-Ghais, Secretary General, OPEC.

19. Minister of State for External Affairs & Culture, H.E Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi transited through Austria on 02 December 2023 during her official visit to Budapest and Bulgaria from 29 November to 01 December 2023.

20. Federal Minister Martin Kocher paid a working visit to India from February 19th to 23rd, 2024. He was accompanied by 38 Austrian companies. In New Delhi, he had bilateral meeting Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of Commerce and Industry and participated in the Raisina Dialogue and took part in CII's Europe Business & Sustainability Conclave. India- Austria start up bridge was also launched during the visit.

Parliamentary Exchanges

21. The Austrian Parliamentary Delegation led by the President of the Austrian National Council Mr. Wolfgang Sobotka, including President of the Federal Council Ms. Christine Schwarz-Fuchs, upon invitation of Lok Sabha Speaker visited India from 12-16 March 2022.

22. A Parliamentary delegation from India led by the Speaker Lok Sabha Sh. Om Birla and including Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha visited Vienna from 07-10 September 2021.

23. Lok Sabha Speaker, Smt. Meira Kumar led a Parliamentary delegation during the visit to Austria in 2009. President of National Council of Austrian Parliament Barbara Prammer visited in 2011 and in 2012 to attend the Seventh meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament on the topic of 'Gender Aware Parliaments'.

24. Several **bilateral agreements/MoUs** have been signed with Austria both at inter-government level as well as between institutions, providing the framework for wide-ranging cooperation. Following are the Agreements which are currently in force:

(i) Air Services Agreement (October 1989); MoU on Air Services (amended and signed in June 1997)

- (ii) MoU between Ministry of Environment and Forests, India and Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs, Austria (January 1994)
- (iii) MoU between CII and Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) (November 1996); MoU between FICCI and WKO (October 2003)
- (iv) Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (November 1999)
- (v) Bilateral Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments (November 1999)
- (vi) MoU on Infrastructure Cooperation in the field of Railways (May 2002)
- (vii) MoU for Infrastructure Cooperation in the Health Sector (February 2005)
- (viii) Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology (Nov 2007)
- (ix) MoU for cooperation in the field of Agriculture (September 2010)
- (x) MoU on scientific cooperation signed between Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and Austrian Science Fund (October 2011)
- (xi) MoU on cooperation in the field of Railways signed between Ministry of Railways of India and the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology of Austria (October 2011).
- (xii) MoU on technology cooperation in the fields of Shipping and Ports (October 2012)
- (xiii) Social Security Agreement (February 2013)
- (xiv) Protocol amending the India-Austria Convention for Avoidance of Double Taxation (February 2017)
- (xv) MoU on cooperation between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi and Medical University of Graz (September 2018)
- (xvi) MoU between Muziris Projects Limited, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala and Institute of Conservation, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria (March 2020)
- (xvii) MoU on Technology Cooperation in Road Infrastructure Sector (December 2020)

(xviii) MoU between ICCR and University of Vienna for short term Chair on India studies (May 2021).

(xviii) MoU on Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (Signed during meeting of EAM and FM in Stockholm on 13th May 2023)

(xix) MoU on Joint Declaration on a Working Holiday (Signed during the visit of EAM in January 2023)

(xxx) MoU on Gainful occupation for family members of Diplomatic staff (Signed during the visit of EAM in January 2023)

(xxxii) MoU on Exemption of visa requirements for diplomatic passports holders (Signed during meeting of EAM and FM in Stockholm on 13th May 2023)

(xxxii) MoU on Cultural Cooperation for the years 2022-26 (Signed during the visit of EAM in January 2023)

Economic Cooperation

25. **Indo-Austria Bilateral Trade:** Total bilateral trade for 2023 (January-December) was 2.93 USD billion. Indian exports to Austria was USD 1.52 billion and imports were USD 1.41 billion. (Source: Statistik Austria)

Indian key exports to Austria: Electronic Goods, Apparels, Textile, Footwear, Rubber articles, Vehicles & Railways parts, Electrical machinery and Mechanical appliances.

India's key imports from Austria: Machinery, Mechanical appliances, Railway parts, Iron and Steel.

Annual Trade Data (January- December)

(Source: Statistik Austria)

Year	Austria's Import from India (Billion US\$)	Austria's Export to India (Billion US\$)	Total Trade (Billion US\$)
2017	0.93	0.85	1.78
2018	1.08	1.06	2.14
2019	1.14	1.02	2.16

2020	1.06	0.99	2.05
2021	1.18	1.29	2.47
2022	1.61	1.23	2.84
2023	1.52	1.41	2.93

26. According to Austrian National Bank, India has received cumulative direct investment of 733 million Euros in 2023. Cumulative FDI from India to Austria has reached about Euro 1.159 billion Euros in 2023.

27. To foster innovation and entrepreneurship between the countries, India-Austria Startup Bridge was launched in February 2024.

28. Culture: The Indo-Austrian cultural relations have a long tradition dating back to 16th century when Balthasar Springer traveled from Tyrol in 1505 to India along with the third Portuguese fleet. The Austrian tradition of Indology began in a period renowned for its distinguished philologist and archaeologist between 1825-1920. The teaching of Sanskrit at Vienna University started in 1845 and a high point was reached in 1880 with the foundation of an independent chair for Indology. Following a brief interruption between 1938-1955, the Chair became an independent department, now known as Institute for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at University of Vienna.

29. The visit of India's philosopher-poet and Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore twice to Vienna – in 1921 and 1926 was one of the crucial bridges of cultural and intellectual exchange between India and Austria. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's famous lecture in 1921 'The religion of the forest', portrayed the value of getting closer to nature and learning union and compassion.

30. Reputed artists of India and Austria have performed in each other's countries for the past several decades. These include - Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, Zakir Hussain, Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Anushka Shankar. Maestro Zubin Mehta continues to be associated with Vienna Philharmonic and has given New Year performances at the famous Music Verein, including the concert in September 2022. Several Bollywood films are being filmed in Austria, given its scenic locales.

31. There is a lot of interest in contemporary Indian literature and theater.

Ayurveda, the Indian traditional system of medicine has been widely acknowledged and practiced in Austria. The holistic approach of Yoga in health care and wellbeing has led many Austrians to embrace Yoga and is testified by the presence of many Yoga schools in Vienna and other Austrian cities.

32. **Indian community:** There are an estimated over 31,000 Indians living in Austria. They are roughly evenly divided between NRIs and PIOs. There are over 450 Indian students pursuing their higher education in Austria.

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