

Austria has a parliamentary democracy based on the principles of other west European democracies. The federal constitution was introduced in 1920 and re-instated in December 1945. The executive consists of the Federal President, who is Head of State and is directly elected every six years, and the Chancellor, who is Head of Government and selects the cabinet.

On the legislative side, Austria has a bicameral Federal Assembly, the National Council, where virtually all legislative authority is concentrated. It is elected on a four-year term.

The Republic of Austria is a member of the United Nations, the IMF, IBRD, OECD, EFTA, GATT, the Council of Europe and several other international organizations. Although not a member of the EEC, Austria has a free trade arrangement with the EEC for most industrial products.

The People

In 1981, Austria had approximately 7.5 million inhabitants, with a higher population concentration in the eastern, flatter part of the country. The overall density is 90 people per square kilometre which is considered to be low for central Europe. The annual population growth is almost nil (0.1%). Ethnic minorities are Croatians and Slovenians, which together represent 1 per cent of inhabitants. Nearly 89 per cent of Austrians are Roman Catholics, and 6 per cent are Protestants.

General Information

Climate — The prevailing west and northwest winds, common to central Europe, determine the climate, which is normally temperate, rather changeable, and subject to Atlantic influences (moderately frequent precipitation throughout the year). Typical mean temperatures for Vienna are: summer 19°C (66°F), and winter -2°C (28°F). In winter, some snow will usually stay in the low-lying plains for several weeks during the period January to March. In Alpine regions average temperatures are lower and snow, depending on the altitude, may remain on the ground from November to April.

Language — Apart from their native German, English is spoken by most businessmen as a first foreign