WORLD TRADE CENTER®
SAN DIEGO

# Austria

## *Country Overview:*

*Location: Central Europe, north of Italy and Slovenia*

*Size: 83,871 sq km*

*Population: 8,221,646 (July 2013 est.)*

*Capital: Vienna*

*Exports-commodities: machinery and equipment, motor vehicles and parts, paper and paperboard, metal goods, chemicals, iron and steel, textiles, foodstuffs*

*Import-commodities: machinery and equipment, motor vehicles, chemicals, metal goods, oil and oil products; foodstuffs*

*Religion: Roman Catholic 73.6%, Protestant 4.7%, Muslim 4.2%, other 3.5%, unspecified 2%, none 12%*

*Government Type: federal republic*

*Chief of State: President Heinz FISCHER (SPOe) (since 8 July 2004)*

*Head of Government: Chancellor Werner FAYMANN (SPOe) (since 2 December 2008) Vice Chancellor Michael SPINDELEGGER (OeVP) (since 21 April 2011)*

*Language: German (official nationwide) 88.6%, Turkish 2.3%, Serbian 2.2%, Croatian (official in Burgenland) 1.6%, other (includes Slovene, official in Carinthia, and Hungarian, official in Burgenland) 5.3%*

## Republic of Austria/Republik Oesterreich

### Meetings and Negotiations

-Punctuality is highly **valued**. Deadlines are expected to be met and agendas are almost always followed strictly.

-Austrians are very title-conscious. Herr ("Mr"), Frau "(Ms") followed by title then surname.

-A firm but fairly brief handshake. It is usually best to wait for the woman to initiate.

-Austrians say **"Gruss Gott,"** a formal **hello**. Direct eye contact is considered a sign of respect and interest during conversation.

-Austrians are quite direct but polite. **Honesty** is appreciated and expected.

-In business situations, Austrians don't get sidelined into personal issues. They are reluctant to express controversial opinions openly.

-Austrians are more concerned with long-term relationships than making a quick sale.

### Business Attire

-Men: Conservative, dark or medium colored suits with collared shirt and tie.

-Women: stylish yet classic business suits or dresses/pants and blouses. **Avoid** wearing overly expensive and/or elaborate accessories.

### Behavior

-Arm's length of personal space is expected during conversations.

-When gesturing for someone to come toward you face your palm downward instead of upward.

-Waving the hand back and forth with the palm up usually signifies "no".

-First impressions are important and you will be judged on your clothing and demeanor.

### Gift Giving

-In general, gifts are not casually exchanged in business. If presented with a gift, reciprocate with a simple gift. It's a good idea to have gifts nicely wrapped. Gifts are opened by both parties right away.

**Appropriate Gifts:**

-Souvenirs from one's country or company

-Books describing your hometown or country, odd number of flowers, a local product (e.g. scotch or bourbon) or a local artifact (e.g. porcelain or silverware)

**Gifts to Avoid:**

-Red roses or carnations (romantic), symbols of funerals: chrysanthemums, white lilies, gifts with sharp edges, gifts with company logo (unless it is subtle)

-Gifts of poor quality

## Business Tips continued

### Conversation

- Austrians take their food seriously. If invited to a business lunch, wait for your host to bring up the topic of business first. Until then, engage in pleasant 'small talk' that is distinct from business.

- Traditionally, the host of the meal/event will initiate a toast. **Prost -"Cheers" !**

- Austrians will express interest in any advanced university degrees you may have as well as the amount of time your company has been in business.

- Austrians are generally conservative people.

- Expect a **great** deal of written communication, both to back up decisions and to maintain a record of discussions.

**Topics to Discuss:**

- Classical music (Haydn, Mozart, Schubert), waltz, opera, Austrian history and art, architecture, palaces, winter sports

**Topics to Avoid:** **- Do not** refer to Austrians or their culture as German, money, separation and divorce, religion, anti-Semitism, Austria's role during World War II