

Austria and the European integration process — Foreword

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Foreword

Despite the occupation of Austria by Allied forces after the Second World War, the country, remaining faithful to the legacy of the pan-European idea of the interwar period and favoured by its geographical location, aspired to play a central role in the organisation of post-war Europe and in the European integration process. In 1948, although part of the country was still occupied by the Soviet Union, Austria became a member of the Organisation for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC). The signing of the State Treaty in 1955 enabled Austria to regain its independence, but its commitment to securing a permanent neutral status did not preclude its participation in other European organisations. Accordingly, Austria became a member of the Council of Europe in 1956 and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1960.

However, the focus of this research corpus is Austria's relationship with the European Communities. In 1956, Austria signed a customs agreement with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). During the 1960s, negotiations were held with a view to securing an economic agreement between Austria and the European Economic Community (EEC). These negotiations successfully led to the signing of a free trade agreement with the EEC in 1972. In 1989, Austria officially applied for accession to the European Communities, and six years later, in 1995, the country became a Member State of the European Union.

The research corpus on 'Austria and the European integration process' offers a wealth of varied resources concerning Austria's accession and the country's participation in the various European organisations. This corpus, which is primarily aimed at the research community, has been developed in association with Thomas Angerer, Assistant Professor in the Department of History at the University of Vienna, and Michael Gehler, Professor in the Department of History at the University of Hildesheim, who has written an explanatory note introducing the corpus, and with the backing of the Austrian National Library. The corpus also includes suggestions for further reading and a chronology of events.