

**Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division,  
DGCI&S, Kolkata.**

**India-Austria Bilateral Relation**

**A. Introduction**

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Profile Report for depicting the Embassy of Austria.

2. Diplomatic relations between Austria and India were established in May 1949 by India's first prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Austria's first post-world war II Chancellor Leopold. Historically, Indo-Austrian ties have been particularly strong and India intervened in June 1953 in Austria's favour during negotiations with the Soviet Union on the Austrian State Treaty. India also supported Austria on the UN-South Tyrol conventions. The main institutional mechanism at the governmental level between India and Austria are the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and the Joint Economic Commission (JEC).

**B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures**

3. As a trading country partner of India and as per latest compiled and available statistics with DGCI&S, India's exports to Austria during 2023-24 have been recorded at 1136.41 million US Dollar and India's imports from Austria during the same reference period stands at 922.23 million US Dollar with a resultant trade balance surplus of 214.18 million US Dollar.

**Export-Import statistics as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as follows :**

**Export-Import statistics from 2019-20 to 2023-24**

(US Dollar Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	1085.33	629.74	455.59
2020-21	1076.17	623.10	453.07
2021-22	1389.45	825.13	564.32
2022-23	2099.27	837.63	1261.64
2023-24	2058.64	922.23	1136.41

*(Source: Department of Commerce, India)*

**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.

4. 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. To foster innovation and entrepreneurship between the countries, India-Austria Start up Bridge was launched in February 2024.

### **C. Other Major Areas of Co-operation:**

➤ 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). MoU between Ministry of Environment and Forests, India and Federal Ministry of Environment, Youth and Family Affairs, Austria (January 1994)

(ii) MoU between CII and Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) (November 1996); MoU between FICCI and WKO (October 2003)

(iii) Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (November 1999)

(iv) Bilateral Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments (November 1999)

(v) MoU on Infrastructure Cooperation in the field of Railways (May 2002)

(vi) MoU for Infrastructure Cooperation in the Health Sector (February 2005)

(vii) Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology (Nov 2007)

(viii) MoU for cooperation in the field of Agriculture (September 2010)

(ix) MoU on scientific cooperation signed between Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and Austrian Science Fund (October 2011)

(x) 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).

- (xi) MoU on technology cooperation in the fields of Shipping and Ports (October 2012)
- (xii) Social Security Agreement (February 2013)
- (xiii) Protocol amending the India-Austria Convention for Avoidance of Double Taxation (February 2017)
- (xiv) MoU on cooperation between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), New Delhi and Medical University of Graz (September 2018)
- (xv) MoU between Muziris Projects Limited, Department of Tourism, Government of Kerala and Institute of Conservation, University of Applied Arts Vienna, Austria (March 2020)
- (xvi) MoU on Technology Cooperation in Road Infrastructure Sector (December 2020) .
- (xvii) 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).
- (xxxi) 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).

➤ Culture: The Indo-Austrian cultural relations have a long tradition dating back to 16th century when Balthasar Springer travelled 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.

➤ 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.

➤ 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.

➤ There is a lot of interest in contemporary Indian literature and theatre. 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.

➤ **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.

*Source:* [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)