



Center for Strategic & International Studies  
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*Homeland Security and Counter-Terrorism*

**A Dialogue with Ernst Strasser  
Austrian Minister of the Interior**

September 8, 2003

CSIS had the privilege of hosting the Austrian Minister of the Interior, Dr. Ernst Strasser, as a part of Senior International Government Briefings sponsored by the Transnational Threats Initiative. The meeting, held on September 8, 2003, was titled 'The European Union Enlargement and Its Consequences for Europe's Internal Security'.

Dr. Strasser acknowledged that the new dangers such as global organized crime and fundamentalism, emanating from both outside as well as within Europe, require a new outlook on security. Given the interrelatedness of these challenges he stressed an ever-greater need for a central coordination within states and increased cooperation among them. The issue of security, he emphasized, is key to Austria, which is a fairly small country with 8 neighbors (most of them also small) and has, up to now, been on the outer border of the European union.

Dr. Strasser pointed out a few measures included in the new security strategy developed by the Austrian Ministry of the Interior in response to the new security challenges: Austria has adapted its domestic security structure to form one concentrated and efficient body in the Federal Ministry of Affairs to be finalized by 2005; the Austrian law enforcement procedures have also been adapted so as to increasingly cooperate with law enforcement agencies in different European countries (such as joint training of officers in Sweden, as approved by the U.N.); Austria also continues its intense cooperation with the U.S., the European countries. It particularly focuses on the Balkans, Eastern Europe, South American drug producing countries and the Caucasus.

In conclusion the Minister recognized the importance of the United States as the partner of the European Union and emphasized the need for a continued cooperation with the US on security issues.