



PARLAMENTARISCHE
BUNDESHEERKOMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT 2016



**The Austrian Parliamentary Commission
for the Federal Armed Forces**

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for the Federal Armed Forces**

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Imprint: Published once yearly pursuant to Section 10 (4) of the Rules of Procedure of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in conjunction with Section 4 (5) of the 2001 Defence Act, Federal Law Gazette I no. 146/2001, as amended.

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Photographs: Parliamentary Administration: Photo Simonis, Johannes Zinner
Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces
Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports/ Armed Forces Photo and Video
Production Service
Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

Printing: Armed Forces Printing Centre, 1030 Vienna, Kaserne Arsenal

Translation: Austrian Armed Forces Language Institute, 1070 Vienna, Stiftskaserne



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Preface of the Presidium

Major changes were introduced by the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports in 2016. Based on the resolution motion passed on 26 November 2015 by the National Council, a reassessment was performed to take into account the changed security situation.

For the first time in 38 years, the Austrian Armed Forces are being expanded in structure and, during the next few years, will be geared to the challenges of the future. The procurement drive that has been launched will result in investment of EUR 1.208 billion in necessary equipment and EUR 535 million in infrastructure by 2020. The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces recognises that improvements have already been introduced with respect to equipment.

The aim is not only to maintain the distinguishing features of the Austrian Armed Forces and equip the soldiers for wide-ranging deployments, but also to reinforce the Austrian population's trust in its armed forces. The strategic change involves numerous projects: an increase in troop strength, implementation of modern non-commissioned officer and officer training, continuation of the considerable expansion of the militia and, last but not least, fundamental reorganisation of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports.

The restructuring means quicker processes, improved coordination and heightened responsiveness to hybrid threats, which are increasingly the focus of security policy.

Furthermore, close cooperation at the international level is necessary in order to combat terrorism in Europe, as well as to conduct humanitarian missions and to manage the migration and refugee crisis. Austria accepts this responsibility and, thanks to the involvement of Austrian soldiers, is making an important contribution, also within the scope of international missions.

During a ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in Parliament on 21 November 2016, the President of the National Council, Doris Bures, and the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil, thanked the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for its valuable contribution to improving military service.



We wish to give particular thanks to the soldiers of the Austrian Armed Forces for their dedication. They perform incredible work both in Austria and abroad, and are therefore rightly held in high esteem by both the Austrian public and the international community.

Vienna, 6 February 2017

The Presidium of the
Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP
Chairman

Mag. Michael Hammer, MP
Executive Chairman

Otto Pendl, MP
Chairman



I. Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Term of office from 1 January 2015 until 31 December 2020



Chairman Otto Pendl, MP

Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 21 January 2015 until 31 December 2016

Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 1 January 2017



Chairman Mag. Michael Hammer, MP

Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 1 January 2017

Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 21 January 2015 to 31 December 2016



Chairman Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP

Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 21 January 2015



II. Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces 2016

Presidium:

MP Otto Pendl, Executive Chairman,
Social Democratic Party
MP Mag. Michael Hammer, Chairman,
People's Party
MP Dr. Reinhard Bösch, Chairman,
Freedom Party

Members:

MP Andrea Gessl-Ranftl,
Social Democratic Party
Christian Schiesser,
Social Democratic Party
MP Mag. Bernd Schönegger,
People's Party
Former MP Oswald Klikovits,
People's Party
Deputy of Provincial Parliament, former MP Mario Kunasek,
Freedom Party
Mr Nikolaus Kunrath,
The Greens
Ms Sonja Stiller, MA MA,
Team Stronach
Former Federal Minister Dr. Friedhelm Frischenschlager,
NEOS

Substitute members:

MP Mag.^a Gisela Wurm,
Social Democratic Party
MP Hannes Weninger,
Social Democratic Party
Prov. Parliament Representative Mag. Marcus Schober,
Social Democratic Party
MP Norbert Sieber,
People's Party
Dr. Franz Pietsch,
People's Party
Mag. Dominik Thauerböck,
People's Party



MP MMag. DDr. Hubert Fuchs,
Freedom Party
Mr Manfred Haidinger,
Freedom Party
Dr. Peter Steyrer,
The Greens
MP Christoph Hagen,
Team Stronach
Mag. Max Künsberg-Sarre,
NEOS

Advisors:

General Mag. Othmar Commenda, CHODS
Lieutenant General Mag. Bernhard Bair, Deputy CHODS
Director General Mag. Christian Kemperle,
MoD/Directorate General I
COL Prof. Harald Harbich, M.D.,
Head, Military Medical Service

Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal
Armed Forces:

Mr Mag. Karl Schneemann, Head
Mr Siegfried Zörnpfenning
Mr Mag. Manfred Gasser
Ms Mag.^a Petra Neuhauser
Ms Sabine Gsaxner
Mr Ernst Kiesel
Ms Larissa Pollak



III. Tasks

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces was founded in 1955 upon establishment of the Austrian Armed Forces to serve as a democratic supervisory body of the National Council. The Commission is governed by Section 4 and Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act and by Section 20a, Section 29 (2) k) and Section 87(4) of the National Council Rules of Procedure Act.

For further information about the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces see the website of the Austrian Parliament:

www.parlament.gv.at/ENGL/WWER/PBK/

III. 1. Terms of office

Pursuant to Section 4 of the 2001 Defence Act, the term of office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is six years. The current term of office commenced on 1 January 2015 with the Commission composed of three members of the Social Democratic Party of Austria, three members of the Austrian People's Party, two members of the Freedom Party of Austria, one member of The Greens, one member of Team Stronach and one member of New Austria and Liberal Forum (NEOS).

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has three chairpersons, who rotate as executive chairperson, and eight further members. The chairpersons are elected by the National Council. The other members are nominated by the political parties in the ratio of their number of seats on the Main Committee of the National Council. Every political party that is represented on the Main Committee of the National Council when the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces holds its constitutive session is entitled to be represented on the Commission.

During the 59th session of the National Council/25th legislative term on 21 January 2015, Otto Pendl, MP (Social Democratic Party of Austria), Mag. Michael Hammer, MP (Austrian People's Party), and Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP (Freedom Party of Austria), were elected chairmen of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for the term of office lasting until 31 December 2020. Otto Pendl, MP, held the office of executive chairman by rotation for two years until 31 December 2016. Mag. Michael Hammer, MP, has held the office of executive chairman since 1 January 2017.



In addition, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is advised during its meetings by the highest-ranking officials of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, which means that there is a continuous exchange of opinions between the supervisory body and the organisation that is being supervised.

At the international level, the duties of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are comparable with those of the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces and of other parliamentary ombuds institutions for armed forces, such as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ireland and Norway.

III. 2. Who may file a complaint?

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces accepts complaints that are filed either directly or indirectly

- by persons who have volunteered for a pre-enlistment fitness examination or who have volunteered for trainee service,
- persons liable to attend a pre-enlistment fitness examination,
- by soldiers of either sex,
- by soldiers' representatives,
- by conscripts in the militia or reserve,
- by persons who have undergone trainee service

and – unless the Commission deems the alleged reason for the complaint to be negligible – examines the complaint and decides upon recommendations to resolve the complaint.

The persons listed above are entitled to file a complaint concerning shortcomings or grievances within the scope of military service, especially regarding personal injustices suffered or encroachments upon professional competencies.

The right to file a complaint expires one year after the issue that gave rise to the complaint has become known to the complainant. However, the right expires at the latest two years after the cause of the complaint has ceased.

In addition, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is entitled to conduct ex-officio investigations into suspected shortcomings or grievances within the scope of military service.



Complaints to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are completely independent of official channels and ensure that an independent third party, i.e. the Commission, assesses the grievance in question.

III. 3. How can the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces be contacted?

in person:

1090 Vienna
Roßauer Lände 1 or Türkenstraße 22a

by telephone:

- +43 50201 10 21050
- +43 1 3198089
- 1230100 (Integrated Telecommunications Infrastructure of the Austrian Armed Forces (IFMIN))

in writing:

- 1090 Vienna, Roßauer Lände 1
- Fax: +43 50201 10 17142
- bundesheer.beschwerden@parlament.gv.at

III. 4. Annual report

The annual report of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for is published once yearly pursuant to Section 10 (4) of the Rules of Procedure in conjunction with Section 4 (5) of the 2001 Defence Act, and is required to be submitted without delay to the National Council together with a position statement of the Federal Minister of Defence. The chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are entitled to attend the debates that are conducted by the committees of the National Council about such reports and to take the floor upon request, including repeatedly.

IV. Activities

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for the responded to queries submitted during the year under review, investigated complaints, arranged for ex-officio investigations, conducted on-site inspections,



eliminated shortcomings and grievances within the scope of military service in close cooperation with the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports and the advisers and presented proposals for improvements with respect to military service and training.

The Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces prepared the plenary meetings of the Commission in order to facilitate decisions on complaints and ex-officio investigations and to make recommendations to the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports.

Information events of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces within the sphere of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and in the international sphere, and work meetings with politicians, religious representatives and businesspeople, served to reinforce understanding of the independent, objective and extensive supervision of military service.

By working together with the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports and the advisers, problems related to complaints that were filed could often be resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant during the process of investigation. The on-site interventions of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces often resulted in elimination of the reported grievances and in many cases contributed to an improved working environment.

In the case of justified complaints, the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports took the supervisory measures deemed necessary (ranging from instructions, reprimands and disciplinary measures to bringing charges).

IV. 1. Key figures

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces launched a total of 144 complaints procedures in 2016.

The complaints were chiefly related to the incorrect conduct of superiors, matters of training and service, personnel matters and inadequate infrastructure, as well as inadequate equipment and sub-standard medical care.

IV. 2. Ex-officio investigations

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces decided to conduct seven ex-officio investigations. Shortcomings and grievances within the scope of military service, incorrect conduct of soldiers and equipment deficiencies were investigated.



IV. 3. Activities pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act

In the year under review, no requests were made for a position statement on an appeal against a selection decision on liability to participate in militia recalls.

V. Examples of complaints/ex-officio investigations

V. 1. Inappropriate language

At a military medical facility, a non-commissioned officer made comments to a paramedic such as "too stupid for anything", "get lost back to your room" and "I don't want to catch another whiff of you today", as well as behaving aggressively towards his subordinate by hurling away a book and raising his hand when demanding that documents be provided. (ref. no. 10/061-2016)

When notified by a national serviceman of a military medical exemption, a platoon leader commented as follows: "I don't give a shit!" (ref. no. 10/069-2016)

Following clumsiness during combat training, a squad leader called a soldier an "idiot". (ref. no. 10/041-2016)

V. 2. Bullying and harassment

In response to an error during combat training, a non-commissioned officer ordered a corporal to carry a 34.5 kg log for a period of 45 minutes. In addition, the corporal was ordered to crawl on his stomach in a field that had been freshly fertilised with cow manure. (ref. no. 10/041-2016)

V. 3. Military medical care and restrictions

A contracted civilian military doctor only informed a corporal about the type and purpose of the prescribed medicinal and hospital treatment when the corporal expressly enquired about such information. (ref. no. 10/067-2016)

Despite being in a walking cast, a national serviceman was assigned as duty corporal (tasked with assisting the company commander) and, despite restrictions imposed by a military doctor, was required to participate in a shooting exercise. (ref. no. 10/069-2016)

In a military medical facility, the dispensing of medication was not documented for incomprehensible reasons. As a result, it was not possible to establish



whether medication that had been recommended by a doctor had been dispensed or not. (ref. no. 10/087-2016)

V. 4. Maladministration

During military training, when preparing the shift schedule for national service personnel deployed as guard soldiers, no consideration was given to the outside temperatures reaching as low as minus 20 °C; the superiors did not respond to the increasing cold during the night, e.g. by shortening the guard shifts. (ref. no. 10/012-2016)

During the lunch break, a non-commissioned officer ordered a corporal to procure cigarettes for his personal use. (ref. no. 10/015-2016)

No reply was given to a written query submitted by a squad leader about not being granted the bonus for trainers. (ref. no. 10/025-2016)

A fine was imposed on a non-commissioned officer due to an accident involving a military vehicle during a voluntary recall; the non-commissioned officer was only informed of the fine by the Armed Forces Personnel Agency after leaving the Armed Forces. (ref. no. 10/044-2016)

A national serviceman had no opportunity to submit his leave request to take a private selection test as part of a job application to the relevant company commander, due to which he was unable to attend the test. (ref. no. 10/050-2016)

V. 5. Sub-standard care

Supplementary pay for a fixed-term assignment to a higher-level post was granted with a delay because the application was ignored. (ref. no. 10/020-2016)

V. 6. Failure to comply with regulations/laws

Issue of an order by a military command on adaptation of regulations for duty service, standby duty and guard duty, according to which no guard commander was to be posted on guard duty. (ref. no. 10/11-2016)

A non-commissioned officer carried his private weapon openly during a law enforcement assistance operation. Another non-commissioned officer drew a swastika on a table in a guardhouse. (ref. no. 10/041-2016)



VI. Making national service more attractive

Evaluation of the reform of national service/making national service more attractive was continued by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in the year under review. Visits were made to a mechanised infantry brigade, an infantry brigade and a military command for the purpose of conducting inspections.

Training

National service personnel have a positive attitude during their time in the Austrian Armed Forces and they participate in the training with dedication and motivation.

Training on various basic training topics provided by 50- to 60-year-old specialist non-commissioned officers of a military command to 20-year-old privates entails frustration on both sides. In practice, there are limits to making national service training more attractive and to modular training. As a result of 24-hour combat days, performance within the area of routine duty (kitchen, welfare facilities, vehicles etc.) decreased. The monthly 24-hour combat days are therefore regarded as burdensome by national service personnel in particular because, unlike in the case of other companies, they are not added to the fixed working hours.

The number of national service personnel is declining. Fewer and fewer privates remain in the companies in the brigades, with the result that fewer and fewer national service personnel can be used by superiors for key personnel functions. The monthly pay of national service personnel is deemed to be far too low at just over EUR 300.

Modules

The modules "shooting" and "sports" are considered varied and interesting by national service personnel. The "disaster relief" module is also popular.

Infrastructure

At the inspected sites, the accommodation for the national service personnel was cramped and in some cases was run down and in need of refurbishment.

Owing to the small size of lockers, privates have to store parts of their equipment on top of lockers in some barracks. In a few cases the sanitary



facilities for national service personnel are not of a modern standard and are in need of refurbishment.

Specific cases

At a single barracks site, national service personnel finished duty at different times of day (3.45 p.m. and 4.15 p.m.). That approach is not transparent and does not serve to make national service more attractive.

VII. Inspection visits of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

VII. 1. Report on the inspection at the 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces conducted an inspection at the 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade at the Vogler Military Airbase in Hörsching on 30 March 2016.

Personnel

In the case of young key personnel, the level of posts filled is too low at 55%. The actual entry-level salary at the start of a military career is not attractive, especially compared to the police, due to the lack of supplementary pay/overtime.

Catering

The quality and quantity of "cook & chill" catering provided by the kitchen at the Military Airbase meets the relevant requirements. At peak times, bottlenecks occur with respect to food selection. The privates complained that foodstuffs, such as yoghurt, milk and mineral water, are not sourced from Austria.

Equipment

Equipment in the CBRN segment is good. There is a lack of personal protective equipment, such as bullet protection. There is a glaring shortage of armoured vehicles (Pandur, Dingo and Husar). At the brigade level, only two of five battalions are suitably equipped and ready for deployment.



Fragmented command structure

The various fields of responsibility at the barracks sites of the 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade (service personnel, military medical facility, welfare facilities, repair workshop, need for construction and refurbishment) result in fragmented responsibilities and impede day-to-day operation. The aim should be to create a uniform command structure to optimise use of the training infrastructure and to achieve improvements within the scope of military service.

VII. 2. Report on the inspection at the 7th Infantry Brigade

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces conducted an inspection at the 7th Infantry Brigade on 23 and 24 May 2016.

Personnel

In the case of young key personnel, the level of posts filled is low at 62%. The actual entry-level salary at the start of a military career is not attractive, especially compared to the police, due to the lack of supplementary pay.

Catering

During law enforcement assistance operations in particular, the system of "cook & chill" catering with regeneration kitchens providing highly flexible, varying meals, proved effective, with strong fluctuations in the number of persons requiring food. It should be noted, however, that the quantity and quality of the "cook & chill" catering depends heavily on the motivation and acceptance on the part of the kitchen staff.

The quality and quantity of the "cook & chill" meals served by the regeneration kitchen meets the requirements. The complaint was made, however, that no foodstuffs from the region are used.

Infrastructure

Refurbishment of the Rohr and Hensel barracks, including extension of garage spaces for engineer equipment, is urgently needed.

The suggestion was made that relocation of the Villach barracks site to the area near the Villach motorway junction would result in a decrease in the costs of frequent construction and refurbishment work at the current barracks.



Equipment

The 03 battle dress uniform has severe deficiencies in terms of functionality and quality. The zip of the combat jacket and the seams tear even with light wear and the clips and the press studs break within little time. There is a lack of personal protective equipment, such as stab protection.

There is a glaring shortage of non-armoured and armoured vehicles.

Equipment with drones, battlefield management systems, e.g. for cartography, situation maps, maps and ground surveillance radars, including for the surveillance or identification of persons, vehicles and aircraft types, is necessary in accordance with the type of deployment for the purpose of information transfer to the reconnaissance system.

Fragmented command structure

The various fields of responsibility at the barracks sites of the 7th Infantry Brigade (service personnel, military medical facility, welfare facilities, repair workshop, need for construction and refurbishment) result in fragmented responsibilities and impede day-to-day operation. For example, if the workshops were hived off, on-site repair capacity would worsen.

The aim should be to create a uniform command structure to optimise use of the training infrastructure and to achieve improvements with regard to day-to-day operation.

VII. 3. Report on the inspection at the Upper Austria Military Command

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces conducted an inspection at the Upper Austria Military Command at the Vogler Military Airbase in Hösching on 30 June 2016.

Personnel

Ninety percent of officer and non-commissioned officer posts are filled. The average age of key personnel is over 53. Civilian personnel account for 50% of the personnel. On average personnel are absent from work due to illness on roughly 20 working days per year at the Upper Austria Military Command, with some personnel being unable to work due to illness for up to a quarter of a year. By 2018, 82 of the 310 personnel of the Upper Austria Military Command are expected to retire. Rapid replacement is unlikely to be possible due to the lower level and pay of the posts in comparison to the other local commands (Air Support Command, 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade Command).



Infrastructure

Even now, civilian infrastructure in the proximity needs to be used for military training courses at the Vogler Military Airbase in Hörsching to accommodate course participants and key personnel and for rapid-response units that start their deployments abroad from the Vogler Military Airbase. Relocation of pre-enlistment fitness examinations from the Garnisonstraße office building in Linz to the Vogler Military Airbase would exacerbate the infrastructure situation.

Reconfiguration of the Infantry Battalion 15 requires additional infrastructure.

Soldiers' mess

Regularly bottlenecks occur at peak times.

VII. 4. Report on the inspection at the Infantry Battalion 24

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces conducted an inspection at the Infantry Battalion 24 in Lienz on 27 September 2016.

Personnel

Personnel recruitment will pose an enormous challenge for the Infantry Battalion 24 in the next few years. Currently 85% of the posts in the Lienz and St. Johann garrisons in Tyrol are filled by 210 key personnel. However, further posts must be filled for the establishment of an additional company by 2019 (a total of 450 posts).

Infrastructure

A state-of-the-art alpine training centre is located in Italy and is a 45-minute drive from the barracks. The Infantry Battalion 24 is therefore seeking to step up cooperation with the Italian mountain warfare units. The alpine centre can be used for daytime training.

The Haspinger barracks in Lienz is structurally sound and provides a good infrastructure. Additional garage buildings need to be built by 2018 for the Högglund combat vehicles.

The standard of accommodation in the Franz-Joseph barracks in Lienz, which houses one company, is average. A modern climbing facility at the barracks site provides excellent training possibilities.

**VII. 5. Report on the inspection at the Pack Animal Centre in Hochfilzen**

An inspection was conducted on 28 September 2016 at the Pack Animal Centre at the Military Training Area in Hochfilzen.

The Pack Animal Centre receives significant assistance from national service personnel, who are called up to the Pack Animal Centre in three cycles per year. They are highly motivated and play a vital role in the care, training and use of the pack animals.

In addition to the Haflinger horses, training also began recently of two donkeys. Donkeys are used worldwide as pack animals. In extreme situations they behave differently from horses, which have a flight response. Unlike Haflinger horses, donkeys are also suitable for use in conditions other than the European climate and topography. The standard of the stables and training halls at the Pack Animal Centre is high.

VII. 6. Report on the inspection at the Hochfilzen Military Training Area

In addition to the Pack Animal Centre of the 6th Infantry Brigade, the Military Training Area also houses the military training area management of the Salzburg Military Command, parts of the Military Service Centre/Military Real Estate Management Centre and the military medical facility/Joint Service Support Command, and a newly built biathlon centre for the 2017 biathlon world championships (Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and the Austrian Ski Association) with accommodation for national service personnel of the 6th Infantry Brigade.

Taking the example of the Hochfilzen Military Training Area, the creation of a uniform command structure on site seems advisable, in view of the various command fields (responsibility of the Salzburg Military Command for accommodation and welfare facilities, responsibility of the Military Service Centre/Military Property Management Centre for construction work, responsibility of the Joint Service Support Command for workshops and the military medical facility, responsibility of the 6th Infantry Brigade for the Pack Animal Centre).



VIII. Special events

VIII. 1. Conference of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

The 537th meeting of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces was held during the conference of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces from 26 to 28 September 2016 at the Felbertal Seminar Centre.

Talks were held on the topics of medical care according to the "Organisation of Medical Services 2013" (*SanOrg*) and the properties of the Austrian Armed Forces.

Medical care according to the "Organisation of Medical Care 2013" (*SanOrg*)

The transition to "Organisation of Medical Care 2013" (*SanOrg*) took place in mid-2014 and, with the exception of a number of proceedings pending at administrative courts, has been concluded. All medical facilities that were not then deemed to be urgently required were and are no longer operated. In particular, medical care for national service personnel is to be ensured by using the resources of the civilian healthcare system so that the medical personnel necessary for deployments are not tied up in the peacetime structure of the armed forces.

Today it is clear that the necessary increase in the number of military doctors and emergency paramedic non-commissioned officers to meet the deployment goals of the AAF cannot be secured under current conditions. Career military doctors can only be deployed according to plan in just 54% of deployment months. In the other months, vacancies are frequent because even contracted civilian doctors pursuant to Section 15 or military doctors can no longer be recruited. Even in civilian healthcare, a lack of doctors is becoming apparent.

There are also too few young paramedic non-commissioned officers/qualified medical and nursing staff and in particular emergency paramedic non-commissioned officers.



An investment of EUR 6 million is urgently needed for the development of a "core" outpatient field hospital. In addition to the provision of those budgetary funds, vacant specialist officer posts urgently need to be filled for procurement planning.

Property

The infrastructure costs managed by the Military Real Estate Management Centre, such as construction costs and energy costs, amount to EUR 180 million per year. The construction and refurbishment of barracks account for more than half of the construction costs of EUR 90 million. Fifty-seven percent of the barracks and administrative buildings show significant deterioration.

With respect to accommodation and seminar centres, for the accommodation areas the standard is two stars or two stars plus according to the relevant amenity categories. The seminar centres are already well equipped, including WLAN, with the exception of the Felbertal Seminar Centre. "Cook & chill" catering has proven successful, but has not yet been implemented across Austria. The quality and selection of meals are heavily dependent on the efforts of the personnel of the regeneration kitchens.

For the fast implementation of construction projects, the Military Real Estate Management Centre requires the relevant specifications and key parameters to be provided by the body that has commissioned the project. In the case of delays, the Military Real Estate Management Centre is the sole focus of blame. By changing priorities at short notice, higher-level bodies automatically cause processes to be slowed down in the case of construction projects.

The establishment of new units results in the additional need for infrastructure. A master plan/standard construction facilitates accelerated construction, including cost-effective and economical implementation of construction projects, with consideration given to local needs.

In the course of the restructuring of the Austrian Armed Forces, the Military Real Estate Management Centre is concerned about downstream



integration, with the result that the lack of powers to issue instructions and make decisions rapidly will cause delays in carrying out construction and refurbishment projects.

VIII. 2. Discussion of the 2015 annual report in Parliament

The report of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces on its activities in 2015 was discussed by the National Defence Committee on 21 June 2016.

The Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, Otto Pendl, MP, noted that specific action needs to be taken in response to the complaints. For example, the pay of national service personnel is too low at just over EUR 300 per month, and there continue to be shortcomings in terms of equipment, the building of infrastructure and vehicles. Chairman Mag. Michael Hammer, MP, emphasised the numerous visits made to the forces for the purpose of inspection, during which the Commission gained an impression of the situation on the ground.

The Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil, noted that numerous complaints about the personnel situation and inadequate equipment are the result of the budgetary situation of the past. He said that the structural budget increase to EUR 2.5 billion by 2020 means that it is now possible to finance significant improvements in protective equipment, mobility and infrastructure. The Federal Minister also clearly stated that the Austrian Armed Forces need to become an attractive employer. A working-life model is designed to offer young people career prospects.

The report was unanimously approved by the National Defence Committee and is therefore deemed to be final.

VIII. 3. Military pastoral care

In recent years, Orthodox, Islamic and Alevi military pastoral care has been offered in addition to Catholic and Protestant military pastoral care. In the year under review, the meetings of the Presidium of Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces with the providers of military



pastoral care in the Austrian Armed Forces continued. The Presidium was impressed by the excellent work that the providers of military pastoral care perform for the soldiers.

Military pastoral care provides soldiers with a point of contact for discussing service-related or personal problems. The providers of military pastoral care are not directly embedded in the military command structure, so in some cases soldiers may be more inclined to turn to such a person than to their direct superior. In many cases it is possible to find a solution to problems and tensions even before a complaint is lodged, or at least to prevent the spread or exacerbation of conflicts.

VIII. 4. Militia system

Pursuant to Section 79 (1) of the Federal Constitutional Law, the Austrian Armed Forces are to be organised according to the principles of a militia system. Accordingly, the Austrian Armed Forces consist of a peacetime and an operational organisation. As a rule, the militia contributes to complete all operational tasks of the Austrian Armed Forces within the scope of deployments.

The militia consists of an autonomously structured militia, of militia contingents and of expert staffs.

The autonomously structured militia consists of units that are not part of the forces organisation of the command responsible for mobilisation and whose organisational structure only includes militia posts. Autonomously structured militia forces primarily serve to maintain scalability as a suitable response to changing situations. In addition, they are tasked with ensuring the resilience of the active service structures in the case of relatively low-intensity deployments.

Militia contingents are teams, squads, sub-units, units and individuals that, as part of the forces organisation of the command with responsibility for mobilisation, serve to supplement the operational organisation and have the same key tasks as the command responsible for mobilisation.

Experts are persons whose expertise (chiefly civilian expertise) is to be used for the purpose of the Austrian Armed Forces. Such expertise can be contributed



by militia conscripts or women serving in the militia on the basis of their civilian training.

During several meetings with the Militia Commissioner of the Austrian Armed Forces, the Presidium learned of the current stage of implementation of militia reform. With reference to the "Militia in National Defence 21.1" basic directive of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, which has been in force since 1 December 2016, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces supports the ambitious goals of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, such as the full staffing and equipping of four (out of ten) infantry battalions by 2018.

VIII. 5. Female soldiers

Since 1998, it has been possible for women to voluntarily serve in the Austrian Armed Forces in all functions.

In recent years, 360 female soldiers have served with the Austrian Armed Forces on average. That corresponds to a percentage of just over 2%. They are deployed in all rank categories. Competitive athletes account for the largest proportion of female soldiers.

With respect to increasing the proportion of female soldiers in the Austrian Armed Forces, the Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, Otto Pendl, MP, explained that the Commission intends to oversee the recruitment drive that the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports has launched. It should be noted, however, that the effort to increase the proportion of female soldiers will be a long-term one, and it will take a number of years before success is reflected in the relevant statistics. At its 539th meeting on 13 December 2016, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces passed the decision to assist the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports in its aim of increasing the proportion of female soldiers by providing parliamentary supervision.

In 2016, 500 applications were submitted by women, which is double the number submitted in previous years. At the end of the year under review, 120 women were serving as soldiers. Advertising measures, such as the "Girls'



Camps" organised by the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, are proving effective, since 22 of 90 participants subsequently enrolled for trainee service.

VIII. 6. 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces – annual reception in Parliament on 21 November 2016

On 21 November 2016, a ceremony was held in Parliament to mark the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

The Commission was founded in 1955 upon the establishment of the Austrian Armed Forces to serve as a democratic supervisory body. The first meeting of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces was held on 22 November 1956 in Vienna under its then name of "Complaints Commission for Military Matters".

In her speech, the President of the National Council, Doris Bures, praised the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, which has become well established since 1956 and remains a point of contact for soldiers today.

"During the 60 years since it was established, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has consistently fulfilled its main duty of serving as a proficient point of contact and effective ombuds institution for soldiers in an exemplary manner. I wish to warmly congratulate the Executive Chairman, Otto Pendl, MP, the two Chairmen, Mag. Michael Hammer, MP, and Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP, and all members of the Commission and thank them sincerely for their extremely important work. I am convinced that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces will continue to perform outstanding work as a vital instrument of democratic oversight in the framework of our defence system." (Extract from the speech given by the President of the National Council on 21 November 2016; for the full text, see the Annex, page 46)

The Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil, thanked the Commission for its excellent cooperation with the Ministry in the interest and for the benefit of the soldiers (see the parliamentary press release of 21 November 2016 in the Annex, page 48).



IX. International cooperation

In addition to its statutory duties of inspection and supervision, the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces deemed it important to cooperate with a range of institutions at the international level to exchange views and discuss the wide-ranging tasks of democratic supervisory bodies for armed forces at a bilateral and multinational level.

IX. 1. Working visit to the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces

On 2 March 2016, the Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces exchanged views and experiences with the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, Dr. Hans-Peter Bartels, in Berlin.

IX. 2. OSCE conference in Berlin

A conference about the "OSCE Code of Conduct" concerning the political and military aspects of security was held on 2 and 3 June 2016 at the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin. The situation assessment and debate about the challenges of implementing the Code of Conduct focused on extensive parliamentary supervision of the security sector, i.e. the armed forces, police forces, paramilitary forces and the intelligence services.

Parliamentary commissioners for the armed forces, ombudspersons and experts from 30 OSCE countries and partner countries used the platform for a joint debate. The Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, Otto Pendl, MP, stressed in his speech that a democratic state must do everything in its power to ensure that democratic checks are not undermined.

Due to its principles and mechanisms, the Code of Conduct lends itself to serving as model for increasing confidence and security.

**IX. 3. Working visit of the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces**

The Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces, Roald Linaker, paid a working visit to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in Austria from 24 to 25 August 2016.

Roald Linaker was impressed by the work of the Commission and expressed thanks for the informative and valuable dialogue.

IX. 4. 8th International Conference of Ombuds Institutions for Armed Forces

As a platform for promoting the democratic supervision of armed forces and preventing maladministration and violations of human rights, the ICOAF has supported and fostered the international exchange of experiences and enhanced cooperation between ombuds institutions for eight years now.

The 8th ICOAF was held from 2 to 5 October 2016 in Amsterdam and focused on "The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in International Missions". Numerous discussions took place on the topics of "The Role of Ombuds Institutions for the Armed Forces in International Missions" and "Veterans". The aim is to reinforce cooperation and the exchange of experiences among the independent ombuds institutions.

IX. 5. OSCE conference in Kiev

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe held an international workshop on "Democratic Control of the Ukrainian Armed Forces" on 31 October 2016 in Kiev.

At the request of OSCE, the composition and activities of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, as a form of parliamentary supervision of armed forces, were presented as a case study.



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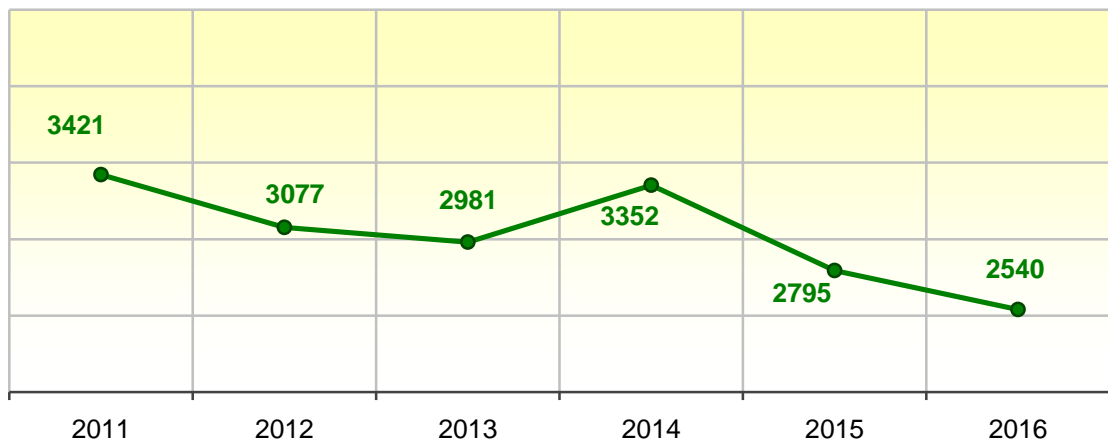


Statistics 2016

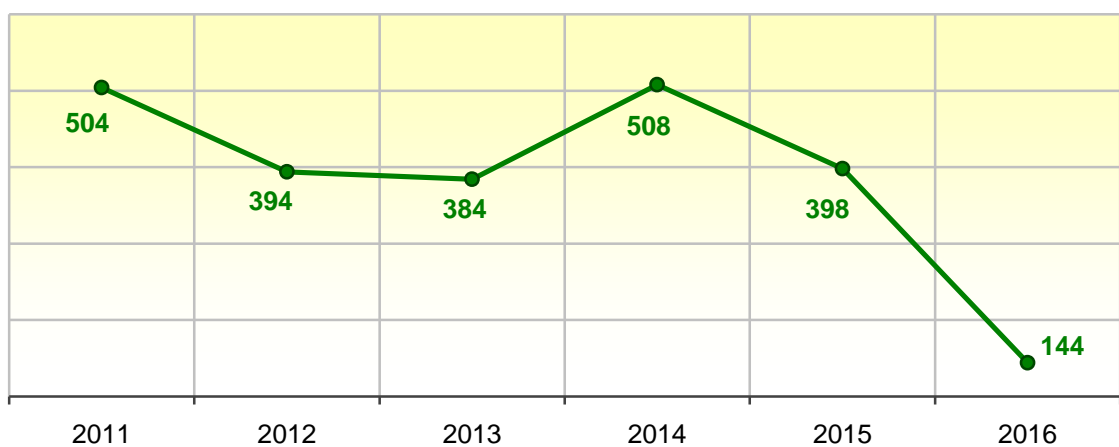
In the period under review, a total of 2,540 people turned to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. In many cases, prompt and efficient help could be provided by giving information and legal advice and brokering solutions.

In 144 cases, it was necessary to conduct a complaints procedure pursuant to Section 4 of the 2001 Defence Act.

Requests for information and legal advice 2011 – 2016

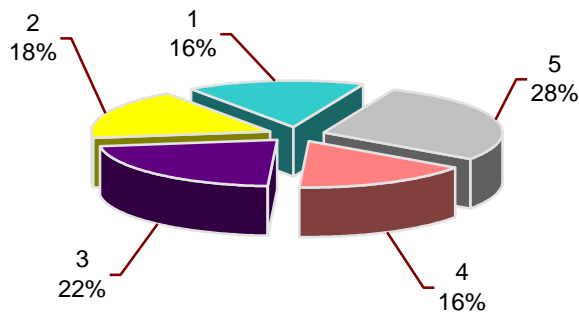


Number of complaints 2011 – 2016



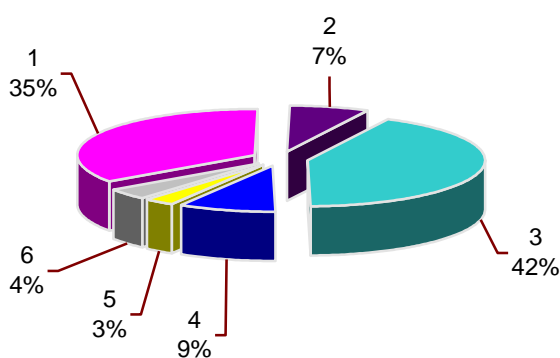


Who were the complaints filed by?



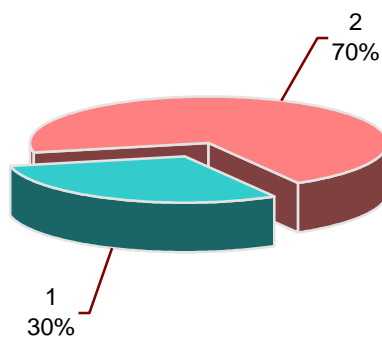
- 1 Privates
- 2 Corporals
- 3 Non-commissioned officers
- 4 Officers
- 5 Other

Reasons for the complaints



- 1 Personnel matters
- 2 Matters concerning disciplinary matters and complaints
- 3 Training, service
- 4 Supplies
- 5 Infrastructure
- 6 Other

Number of complaints filed by national service personnel and key personnel



- 1 National service personnel
- 2 Key personnel



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Extract from the 2001 Defence Act

2001 Defence Act Federal Law Gazette I No. 146, last amended by Federal Act, Federal Law Gazette I No. 65/2015

Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Section 4. (1) (Constitutional stipulation) A complaints commission for military matters (Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces) shall be collocated with the Federal Minister of Defence. The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall consist of three chairpersons, each of whom, pursuant to para 10, shall become the executive chairperson by rotation, as well as initially of six further members. The chairpersons shall be appointed by the National Council pursuant to para 9, the other six members shall be nominated by the political parties in accordance with d'Hondt in proportion to their numbers of seats on the Main Committee of the National Council. Every party represented on the Main Committee of the National Council shall have the right to be represented in the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. Should, by way of this calculation, not every such party be able to provide a member, this party shall be entitled to appoint an additional member. The political parties shall nominate a substitute member for each member and each Chairperson proposed by them. The chairpersons shall jointly constitute the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The term of office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be six years. Only members of the National Council shall be eligible to be nominated as chairpersons, and moreover experts from the sphere of national defence and human rights shall be eligible to be nominated as members and substitute members.

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall have the quorum if at least two Chairpersons and three further members are present. Decisions shall be taken by majority. In the event of a tie, the Executive Chairperson shall have the casting vote.

(3) The Chief of Defence Staff and a suitable member of the Armed Forces, nominated by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, shall serve as advisors to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(4) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall accept complaints lodged, directly or indirectly, by persons who have volunteered for pre-enlistment fitness examination or trainee service, by persons liable to pre-enlistment fitness examination, by soldiers, as well as by conscripts in the militia or reserve following national service, by former trainee service personnel, and – unless the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces finds the alleged grounds for the complaint negligible – examine them and decide upon recommendations pertaining to their settlement. This shall also pertain to complaints



lodged by soldiers' representatives. If this complaint has only been lodged on account of a single soldier, her/his consent shall be required. The right to file a complaint expires one year after the issue giving rise to the complaint has become known to the complainant, in any case two years after the issue giving rise to the complaint has become void. In addition, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is entitled to investigate ex officio shortcomings or grievances within the military, suspected by the Commission. If need be, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces may carry out the investigations necessary for its work on site, and obtain all necessary information from those concerned.

(5) **(Constitutional stipulation)** By 1 March of every year, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall submit a report on its work and the recommendations it made in the past year. This report shall be presented without delay by the Federal Minister of Defence to the National Council, together with a statement concerning the recommendations made by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The Chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall have the right to take part in the hearings concerning these reports in the committees of the National Council, and to be heard whenever they so request. Further details are laid down in the National Council Rules of Procedure Act.

(6) Necessary expenditures which arise from the work of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, including necessary travel costs, shall be reimbursed to the Chairpersons and the other members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. These expenditures shall be reimbursed in accordance with the provisions of the 1955 Travel Fees Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 133, as would civil servants at service-grade VIII level in the general administration. For his/her work in the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces the executive chairperson shall be paid an additional compensation of 20% of the salary of a federal civil servant in the general administration at the highest salary-grade level of service-grade IX, the other chairpersons shall be paid this compensation to the extent of 10% of the described salary. The Chairpersons shall not be paid this compensation if they are Members of Parliament (National Council, Federal Council, or a provincial parliament), or members of the federal or a provincial government.

(7) **(Constitutional stipulation)** The Federal Minister of Defence shall provide the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces with the necessary personnel and bear the necessary material costs. In the discharge of tasks related to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, the personnel provided shall only follow the instructions of the executive chairperson.

(8) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall lay down its own rules of procedure and vote them into effect by two-third majority.

(9) **(Constitutional stipulation)** The Chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be elected by the National Council on the basis of a comprehensive proposal by the Main Committee thereof. In drafting this proposal, each of the three strongest parliamentary parties in the National Council shall have the right to nominate one candidate. In case of an equal number of seats, the number of votes passed in the last National Council election shall decide. Should a chairperson retire early, the party which nominated her or him in the first place shall



name a new member. On the basis of this nomination, she/he shall be elected by the National Council for the term of office remaining.

(10) The Executive Chairpersons change by rotation every two years, the sequence of said rotation reflecting the number of seats held by their respective nominating party. In case of an equal number of seats, the number of votes passed in the last National Council election shall decide. The Executive Chairperson of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall direct its work, the other Chairpersons shall hold the office of her or his deputy in the sequence previously described.

Militia recalls and preparatory militia training

Section 21(3) Conscripts who have not volunteered for militia recalls but have successfully completed preparatory militia training during national service may be rendered liable to militia recalls, provided the required functions cannot be sufficiently staffed with conscripts having volunteered for militia recalls. To this end the conscripts shall be selected by administrative selection decision within two years of their release from national service, according to the prevalent military requirements, all the while taking personal circumstances into consideration. Such a liability may only affect at most 12 % of those conscripts who have completed their national service in the respective calendar year. This percentage shall include those conscripts who have volunteered for militia recalls. Should the conscript so demand, prior to passing an administrative selection decision, a statement of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be obtained. On the basis of an effective administrative selection decision conscripts may be inducted for militia recalls up to their fiftieth birthday.



Extract from the National Council Rules of Procedure Act

1975 Rules of Procedure Act Federal Law Gazette I No. 410, last amended by Federal Act, Federal Law Gazette I No. 41/2016

Section 20a (1) The Chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are entitled to participate in the negotiations concerning the report pursuant to section 4, para 5, 2001 Defence Act in the respective committee of the National Council.

(2) The Chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces have the right to speak, also repeatedly, during the debates pursuant to para 1, but without interrupting a speaker.

(3) The respective committee can demand the presence of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces's Chairpersons during debates pursuant to para 1.

Section 29 (2) The Main Committee shall especially be responsible for the following matters:

...

k) Submittal of a comprehensive proposal concerning the election of the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces pursuant to section 4, para 9, 2001 Defence Act.

Section 87 (4) The President of the Court of Audit, the Members of the Ombudsman Board, as well as the Chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are elected at the recommendation of the Main Committee, pursuant to section 4, Defence Act.



The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Rules of Procedure

On 27 January 2011, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces adopted the following rules of procedure pursuant to Section 4 (8) of the 2001 Defence Act, Federal Law Gazette No. 146/2001, amended by Federal Law, Federal Law Gazette No. 85/2009:

Composition of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Section 1 (1) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has the following members:

the three chairpersons appointed by the National Council, each of whom shall become the executive chairperson by rotation pursuant to Section 4 (9) of the 2001 Defence Act (*Wehrgesetz*), as well as six further members nominated by the political parties in the ratio of their numbers of seats on the Main Committee of the National Council. The chairpersons shall jointly constitute the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(2) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has the following substitute members:

the substitutes for each member and each chairperson nominated by the respective political parties. The substitute members are members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for the period during which the persons specified in paragraph (1) are prevented from attending.

(3) Advisers to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are as follows:

- the Chief of Defence Staff,
- a suitable official appointed by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports.

Authorised substitutes acting on behalf of the advisers shall be treated on a par with such advisers. An authorised military medical expert shall attend the meetings of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(4) Prior to executing their offices for the first time, the persons listed in paragraphs (1) and (2) shall be sworn in by the executive chairperson; the executive chairperson in turn shall be sworn in by the member of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces who is most senior by age. The oath is as follows:

"I swear that as a member (chairperson) of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces I shall perform my duties impartially and to the best of my knowledge and belief."

(5) The chairpersons, the further members and the substitute members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are, unless otherwise



stipulated by law, required to comply with the requirement of official confidentiality (Section 20 (3) of the Federal Constitutional Act).

(6) The executive chairperson shall discharge the duties that are incumbent upon them pursuant to the 2001 Defence Act, especially as regards preparing, convening and chairing meetings, and as regards the minutes and the annual reports. If they are unable to attend, one of their deputies shall act on their behalf. In such event, the deputy who, pursuant to Section 4 (10) of the 2001 Defence Act, is to succeed the executive chairperson upon the end of their two-year term of office shall act as executive chairperson. If, however, the executive chairperson is a member of the third largest party, the chairperson nominated by the party with the highest number of seats in the National Council shall act as executive chairperson in such event. At the same time, the unavailable chairperson's substitute member shall be summoned; this substitute member, however, shall only serve as a member pursuant to Section 1(1).

Duties of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Section 2 (1) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall accept complaints that are filed directly or indirectly

- a) by persons who have volunteered for a pre-enlistment fitness examination or trainee service,
- b) by persons liable to attend a pre-enlistment fitness examination,
- c) by soldiers of either sex,
- d) by conscripts in the militia or reserve who have completed national service, and by persons who have undergone trainee service,
- e) by soldiers' representatives on behalf of the soldiers they represent (if the complaint is lodged on behalf of only a single soldier, that soldier's consent is required),

examine them and decide on recommendations to resolve the complaint.

(2) In addition, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is entitled to conduct *ex-officio* investigations into suspected shortcomings or grievances within the scope of military service.

(3) If necessary, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces may carry out the investigations necessary for its work on site, and obtain all necessary information from those concerned.

(4) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall furthermore adopt the position statements that the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports is required to obtain pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act prior to reaching a negative decision on an appeal against a selection decision taken by the respective military command.

Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Section 3 (1) The Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is established to attend to the affairs of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. Pursuant to Section 4 (7) of the 2001



Defence Act, the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports shall provide the required personnel and cover the necessary material expenses. Only the executive chairperson is entitled to instruct the personnel. The executive chairperson shall decide on all personnel matters that have a direct and immediate organisational bearing upon the discharge of duties within the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces (especially direction and authorisation of overtime, regulation of overtime compensation, leave, taking of holidays, training and professional development). In all other personnel matters, the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports shall contact the executive chairperson before making a decision.

(2) The head of the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces and their staff shall discharge their duties pursuant to the provisions of these Rules of Procedure. The head of the Office and their staff shall in particular

- a) assist the chairpersons and other members and substitute members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in the discharge of their duties;
- b) take care of the administration and clerical organisation of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- c) liaise with the Presidium of the National Council, the Parliamentary Administration, the offices of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, especially the advisers of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, and other relevant central bodies in the scope of the responsibilities of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- d) prepare and assist the meetings of the Presidium and the plenum of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, as well as on-site hearings, investigations following extraordinary complaints and investigations of suspected deficiencies and grievances in the scope of military service;
- e) ascertain facts relevant to extraordinary complaints that have been lodged and ex-officio procedures;
- f) obtain position statements of the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and other offices in preparation for resolving extraordinary complaints and ex-officio investigations;
- g) prepare draft proposals for the meetings of the Presidium and the plenum of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- h) implement decisions made by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- i) process enquiries submitted to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces or the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- j) receive extraordinary complaints that are lodged directly with the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces and information that may require ex-officio investigations;



- k) perform filing, documentation and evaluation of extraordinary complaints that have been lodged and ex-officio investigations, including relevant statistics, for the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- l) prepare the annual report of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces and process the position statement made about the report by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports;
- m) take care of matters of the Rules of Procedure and the allocation of responsibilities within the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces;
- n) prepare position statements to be made by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces pursuant to Section 21(3) of the 2001 Defence Act.

(3) The head of the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is entitled to authorise activities that serve to accomplish the above tasks. They shall handle other matters that they have been authorised to handle independently on behalf of the executive chairperson, including with their signature. The executive chairperson may declare themselves responsible for any matter, or reserve the right to authorise the decision.

Passage of decisions of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Section 4 (1) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall have a quorum if at least two chairpersons and three further members are present.

(2) Decisions shall be taken by majority. In the event of a tie, the executive chairperson shall have the casting vote.

Duties of the chairpersons

Section 5 (1) Meetings of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be prepared by the executive chairperson together with her/his two deputies (the Presidium) with the assistance of the head of the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(2) All complaints lodged either directly with the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces or through official channels shall be submitted to the executive chairperson without delay. One of the three chairpersons will be appointed rapporteur for each complaint. At the beginning of each calendar year, the three chairpersons shall agree on an allocation of duties that clearly defines the criteria by which the rapporteurs are assigned the respective complaints.

(3) In the event of cases that clearly do not come under the remit of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, in matters already decided on by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces and in cases of lack of entitlement to lodge a complaint, the executive chairperson shall inform the complainant that the complaint will, in all probability, not be dealt with by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.



(4) Complaints lodged anonymously shall be accepted by the executive chairperson. The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be notified of such complaints, as well as of reports and statements made by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports concerning such complaints.

(5) If a complaint is made against a decision that may be appealed against by means of ordinary or extraordinary remedy or regarding which a complaint may be lodged with the Constitutional Court or the Supreme Administrative Court, the complainant must be made aware of their right to the above remedies without delay.

(6) The executive chairperson shall notify the complainant of the receipt and further processing of the complaint.

(7) The executive chairperson shall initiate or conduct the ascertainment of facts or an investigation of the complaint by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, including on site if necessary (Section 8 (9)), determine the type of investigation to be conducted and, if necessary, order the submission of an investigation report, including the position statement of the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports.

(8) The executive chairperson shall ensure that information and documents required for the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces to make a decision on a complaint are available without delay, by no later than six weeks after receipt of the complaint. If that deadline is not met, reasons for the failure to meet the deadline shall be reported to the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces at the following meeting.

(9) Requests of the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the Wehrgesetz of 2001 shall be forwarded by the executive chairman to the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces without delay, by no later than when the documents for the following meeting are sent. If a member of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces deems that the evaluation of a case requires further investigations, the executive chairperson shall arrange for such investigations to be conducted without delay.

(10) The chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are entitled to attend the debates conducted on the report pursuant to Section 4 (5) of the 2001 Defence Act by the relevant committee of the National Council. The chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces have the right to take the floor, including repeatedly, during such debates, but without interrupting a speaker. The relevant committee is entitled to require the presence of the chairpersons of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces during such debates.

Ex-officio investigation of deficiencies and grievances and investigation of complaints on site

Section 6 (1) The ex-officio investigation of suspected shortcomings and grievances in the scope of military service or the investigation of complaints on site requires a relevant decision taken by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.



(2) In cases of particular urgency, if the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has not convened, the Presidium may make a relevant decision and conduct an ex-officio investigation of deficiencies and grievances on site. Section 4 and Section 5 (2), (7) and (8) shall apply *mutatis mutandis*.

(3) The members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces must be notified without delay of a decision of the Presidium pursuant to paragraph (2). If an on-site investigation is conducted, any member may participate in such investigation.

(4) In the case of a decision of the Presidium pursuant to paragraph (2), the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be notified of the outcome of the investigation as well as investigations performed and measures taken.

Convening meetings

Section 7 (1) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall be convened by the executive chairperson at least once a month as a rule after agreeing on the date with the deputy chairpersons and the members.

(2) At the request of at least two members, the executive chairperson shall convene the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces within 14 days.

(3) The meeting shall be convened in written form, including the agenda, and be delivered to the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, as well as its advisers, by registered post, if possible eight days in advance of the meeting.

(4) The notice shall include the documents necessary for a decision, any measures that have already been taken, as well as a proposal by the rapporteur to be decided on by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(5) Requests of the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act shall be listed as a separate item on the agenda. The executive chairperson shall annex to such request a statement by the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports, which must include the ascertained facts and the reasons for the intended rejection of the appeal, as well as a proposal made by them regarding the position statement of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(6) If a member's inability to attend is already established at the time the meeting is convened, the respective substitute member shall be sent the necessary documents by the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. If it subsequently emerges that the member cannot attend, the respective member shall forward the invitation and documents to the substitute member and inform the executive chairperson or the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces of their inability to attend.

Meetings

Section 8 (1) The executive chairperson shall open, chair and then close the meeting once the agenda has been completed. The executive chairperson may



suspend the meeting for a short time, or adjourn it; the new date shall be established immediately or communicated separately to the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces by the Office.

(2) If the executive chairperson is prevented from attending at short notice, they may entrust the deputy specified in Section 1 (6) with the tasks listed in paragraph (1).

(3) The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces may decide to amend or supplement the agenda.

(4) In the following cases, the complaint – except if an ex-officio investigation is launched – shall not be dealt with and the procedure shall be closed:

- a) if the complaint was lodged by a person ineligible to lodge a complaint (Section 2 (1)),
- b) if personal involvement (Section 12 (1) of the General Service Regulations for the Austrian Armed Forces (ADV)) cannot be proven,
- c) if no grievances related to military service are alleged. That is also the case if the complaint exclusively concerns matters of tenured or contractual civil servants related to employment law (and no other grievances in the scope of military service are alleged),
- d) if the complaint is retracted of the complainant's free will,
- e) if a recommendation has already been adopted with respect to the complaint and there is no reason for reopening the complaint,
- f) if the alleged grounds for complaint are negligible (first sentence of Section 4 (4) of the 2001 Defence Act),
- g) if the limitation period has been exceeded (fourth sentence of Section 4 (4) of the 2001 Defence Act).

(5) In all other cases, the complaint must be dealt with materially. This includes the following cases:

- a) if there is a formal possibility of appealing to the supreme courts or the independent administrative tribunals, but such bodies do not have material decision-making authority;
- b) if the expiry of a deadline does not permit further disciplinary or court proceedings.

If disciplinary or court proceedings are pending in the case of a complaint, the complaint will not be dealt with until a final (non-appealable) ruling has been passed.

(6) If it comes under the remit of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall deal with the complaint or the result of an ex-officio investigation (inspection of documents, hearing etc.). With regard to resolving the complaint, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall agree on recommendations or, on the basis of a specific case, on a general recommendation.

(7) In the case of complaints or ex-officio investigations where measures have already been taken by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports or organs within his purview, a decision shall be made on whether such measures are deemed adequate.



(8) All members are authorised to submit motions for decisions of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The advisers shall be given the floor just like all the members, as often as they wish to have the floor. In addition, the advisers shall provide information at the request of the members.

(9) If the respective rapporteur or a member deems that further investigations are necessary, in particular an on-site investigation, the hearing of complainants or those concerned by the complaint or the summoning of witnesses or experts, they shall submit a relevant request to the Presidium or submit such a request during the meeting of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. If such a request is granted, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces shall set a deadline for implementing the decision.

(10) The decisions made by the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces pursuant to paragraph (6) shall be signed by the members present at the meeting and subsequently forwarded to the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports.

(11) The provisions set out in paragraphs (7), (8) and (10) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the procedure for agreeing upon a position statement to be made by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act. The sessions of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces are not public.

Minutes of meetings

Section 9 (1) Minutes shall be taken for every meeting of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, containing the names of those present and all decisions taken at the meeting and shall include a copy of the agenda as an annex.

(2) If decisions are not taken unanimously, ayes and nays shall be included in the minutes. Any member may have a detailed description of the arguments put forward by them for or against a motion entered into the minutes.

(3) The correctness of the minutes shall be examined and signed by the executive chairperson, as well as by the head of the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The minutes shall be available for inspection at the following meeting.

Annual report

Section 10 (1) By the end of January of each year, the executive chairperson shall send a draft version of the report on the previous year's activities and recommendations of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces (Section 4 (5) of the) to the members of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces.

(2) If the processing of complaints results in recommendations or observations whose importance goes beyond the individual case, then such recommendations or observations shall, upon the instructions of the executive chairman, be included in a note by the Office of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces for the purpose of preparing the annual report.



(3) The activities of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces concerning position statements pursuant to Section 21 (3) of the 2001 Defence Act shall be reported on in a separate section.

(4) The final version of the annual report, which takes members' suggestions into consideration, shall, after it has been agreed upon by the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, be submitted to the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports by no later than 1 March.



Speech given by the President of the National Council, Doris Bures, during the ceremony to mark the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in Parliament on 21 November 2016



Executive Chairman,

Chairmen,

Federal Minister,

Members of the
Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed
Forces,

Ladies and gentlemen,

A few weeks ago I had the honour of being the first woman to give a speech on the Austrian National Holiday during the swearing-in ceremony for privates of the Austrian Armed Forces on Heldenplatz in Vienna. I gave that speech to soldiers belonging to armed forces whose tasks have changed dramatically since the time when they were established and which, as is apparent even at first glance, have become more diverse and have more female members now.

From the outset, the Austrian Austrian Armed Forces, which were re-established in 1955, were set apart from all other armies and military units in the long history of our country by the fact of being a democratic army. The Austrian Armed Forces are the army of the democratic Republic of Austria and their law emanates from the people. They are therefore subject to supervision by the democratic institutions of our country, in particular, of course, by Parliament.

The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, which celebrates its 60th anniversary today, is an institution that stands for democratic supervision of the military like none other.

During the National Council debate in autumn 1955 that preceded the adoption of the Defence Act and the introduction of the "Complaints Commission for Military Matters", as it was originally called, the need for the newly founded Austrian Armed Forces to be integrated in the institutions of the democratic state was emphasised across all party lines. One MP cited the French statesman Georges Clemenceau, who once commented that "war is too important to be left to the generals". While the confidently expressed statement by the later Austrian president Theodor Körner at the start of the First Republic that "the armed forces are at the command of the national assembly", which was referred to during the debate, did not result in the lasting integration of the Austrian Armed Forces in the democratic system, due to the turmoil and authoritarian developments of the 1920s and 1930s, there can be no doubt that the Austrian Armed Forces are integrated in the democratic system today.

Nor is there any doubt that the humanist concept of man of a democratic state must be reflected in its military. Another MP noted that "civilian democratic life" and "a system of defence ... are not irreconcilable". The newly established Commission in



particular will "contribute to the elimination of military misconduct in the future", the MP added. While there is a need for military discipline, "the principle must be that those of higher rank should treat their subordinates as they would wish to be treated themselves", the MP noted. Finally, another speaker spoke of the importance of young Austrian men not being made to feel that they "are subject to bullying and harassment". Bullying and harassment, in a far worse form, were still vividly recalled by many Austrians from the calamitous period of National Socialism and the Wehrmacht (the armed forces of that time).

In addition, repeated mention was made in the debate of permanent neutrality, which was declared in 1955, and reference was made to the fact that the neutral states of Switzerland and Sweden with their comparable institutions served as a model for the newly established complaints commission.

"During the 60 years since it was established, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has consistently fulfilled its main duty of serving as a proficient point of contact and ombuds institution for soldiers in an exemplary manner. I wish to warmly congratulate the Executive Chairman, Otto Pendl, MP, the two Chairmen, Mag. Michael Hammer, MP, and Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP, and all members of the Commission and thank them sincerely for their extremely important work. I am convinced that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces will continue to perform outstanding work as a vital instrument of democratic supervision in the framework of our defence system.

Thank you.



Parliamentary press release no. 1274 of 21 November 2016

Sixtieth anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces

Ceremony in Parliament

Vienna (parliamentary press release) – Numerous high-ranking politicians and members of the Austrian Armed Forces celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces in Parliament today. During a ceremony to mark the occasion, the President of the National Council, Doris Bures, praised the work of the Commission as evidence of the integration of the Austrian Armed Forces within the democratic system, while the Deputy President of the National Council, Karlheinz Kopf, underlined the importance of supervision of the Austrian Armed Forces by Parliament. Both Federal Minister Hans Peter Doskozil and the Executive Chairman of the Commission, Otto Pendl, MP, spoke about the excellent cooperation between the Federal Ministry of Defence and Sports and the Commission.

The Commission, which held its first meeting under its then name of "Complaints Commission for Military Matters" on 22 November 1956, is composed of representatives of the parliamentary groups and investigates the complaints of soldiers of the Austrian Armed Forces independently of official channels. It makes recommendations and is also authorised to conduct ex-officio investigations if it has suspicion of shortcomings in the scope of military service.

Bures underlines the importance of democratic supervision of the Austrian Armed Forces

During its 60-year history, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces has consistently fulfilled its main duty of serving as a proficient point of contact for soldiers in an exemplary manner, said the President of the National Council, Doris Bures. The President of the National Council confirmed that there is no doubt that the Austrian Armed Forces, which today are more diverse and, above all, more female, are a democratic army subject to the supervision of democratic institutions, especially Parliament. She expressed her conviction that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces will continue to perform outstanding work as a vital instrument of democratic supervision in the framework of the Austrian defence system.

Kopf praises pro-activeness of the Commission

Karlheinz Kopf also commended the positive development of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The Deputy President of the National Council made particular mention of the pro-active approach that has enabled improvements and corrections to be made, in many cases even before complaints are lodged. Kopf also noted the importance of the supervision and strategic guidance provided by Parliament.



Doskozil welcomes interaction between Parliament and the Austrian Armed Forces

Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil noted that the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces acts as an important supervision body. The Federal Minister of Defence commented, however, that he could envisage even more intensive involvement of Parliament, for example with respect to appointment of the Legal Protection Commissioner. Doskozil likewise praised the open and fair cooperation between his Ministry and Parliament and the interaction between the Austrian Armed Forces and the National Council, and welcomed the unanimous decision on evaluation of the reform of the Austrian Armed Forces, commenting that the vote expressed the views of the Members of Parliament that the development of the Austrian Armed Forces is not progressing along the right lines.

Pendl: we are committed to representing soldiers' concerns

"The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces sees itself not as an opponent, but as a partner that is committed to representing soldiers' concerns." Otto Pendl, MP (S), as Executive Chairman of the Commission, emphasised the interaction between Parliament and the Defence Ministry and, with reference to the numerous recommendations that have been implemented, noted that the continuous work of the Commission is showing results. According to Pendl, the key challenge now is to respond to the growing interest in the Austrian Armed Forces and to provide soldiers with the necessary equipment to fulfil their duties. He also noted the need to take into account the fact that the Austrian Armed Forces "cannot remain a male domain" in the long term.

Pendl's colleagues on the Presidium, namely Mag. Michael Hammer, MP (V), and Reinhard Bösch, MP (F), were also full of praise for the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The Commission today serves as a model worldwide for the democratic supervision of armed forces, said the representative of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), while Bösch emphasised the positive cooperation between Parliament and the Ministry.

The Guard Ensemble performed at the celebration and concluded the event by playing a march to mark Otto Pendl's 65th birthday in the Columned Hall. (End) hof



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Sixtieth anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces



A ceremony was held in Parliament on 21 November 2016 to mark the 60th anniversary of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces. The President of the National Council, Doris Bures, is pictured during her speech in the reception room.



The President of the National Council, Doris Bures, the Deputy President of the National Council, Karlheinz Kopf, the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, Mag. Hans Peter Dorkozil, and the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces with the Guard Ensemble in the Columned Hall of Parliament.

Work meetings



On 17 February 2016, the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces held a work meeting with the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports, Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil, in Parliament.



A round-table discussion led by the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces was held between the providers of military pastoral care of various faiths and high-ranking commanders on the topic of work satisfaction on 8 March 2016 at the Defence Academy.



Work meetings



A work meeting was held in Parliament with the Militia Commissioner of the Austrian Armed Forces, Brigadier Mag. Erwin Hameseder, on 26 April 2016.

Inspection visits



The Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces is pictured during the inspection conducted by the Commission at the 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade with Brigade Commander Brigadier Christian Riener, on 30 March 2016 in Hörsching at the Vogler Military Airbase.



During an inspection of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces on 30 March 2016, Chairman Dr. Reinhard Bösch, MP, learnt about the situation at the CBRN Defence Company of the 4th Mechanised Infantry Brigade.

Inspection visits



In the scope of a conference at the Felbertal Seminar Centre, the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces conducted an inspection at the Infantry Battalion 24 on 27 September 2016 in Lienz.



The Commander of the Pack Animal Centre, Major Josef Hager, provided an overview of training and organisation of the Pack Animal Centre in Hochfilzen on 28 September 2016.



International networking



Executive Chairman Otto Pendl, MP, and Chairman Mag. Michael Hammer, MP, are pictured in Parliament in a group photograph with the Parliamentary Ombudsman for the Norwegian Armed Forces, Roald Linaker, on 24 August 2016.



On behalf of the Presidium of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, MinR Mag. Karl Schneemann attended the 8th ICOAF from 2 to 5 October 2016 in Amsterdam.

Awards



The Executive Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, Otto Pendl, MP, was awarded the highest military order of the Republic of Austria, the Military Order of Merit, on 23 June 2016. The Federal Minister of Defence, Mag. Hans Peter Doskozil, is pictured during presentation of the order.



Dr. Reinhard Bösch, Chairman of the Austrian Parliamentary Commission for the Federal Armed Forces, MP, and Mag. Bernd Schönegger, Member of the Parliamentary Austrian Armed Forces Commission, MP, were awarded the Military Medal of Recognition on 15 December 2016.