Paving Austria's Way to Brussels: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (1986-1997) – A Banker, Social Democrat, and Pragmatic European Leader

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I. The leading question on the Theme and the Methodological Approach

Why choose to portray Franz Vranitzky and describe his political thought and action? First of all, because he was a key figure in Austria's domestic and foreign policy from the second half of the 1980s to the second half of the 1990s. Secondly, Franz Vranitzky cannot be viewed exclusively as a classic party politician clearly belonging to "his" *Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs* (the Social Democratic Party of Austria, or SPÖ), since he often acted like a statesman. Thirdly, he cannot be described as purely "European", because his foreign policy orientation included an international and a global dimension. Fourthly, Vranitzky was the mainly responsible politician for banishing the shadows of Austria's Nazi past. Fifthly, thus far he is the only Austrian ever to have been awarded the Charlemagne Prize.

This article therefore consists of five parts: after raising questions and explaining the methodological approach (I), there will be a presentation and analysis of the various stages of Vranitzky's biography up to his time as Finance Minister (II), his political career as chancellor, his approach and policies towards Europe and European integration (III), and his nomination for the Charlemagne Prize (IV). Finally, I will attempt to draw conclusions on the theme as presented (V).

As to the state of biographical research on the person and the environment of the Federal Chancellor Franz Vranitzky (who was in office from 1986 to 1997), it must be noted that there is up to now, for instance, no archive-based, well-founded and scholarly written cradle-to-grave type of biography. What are the reasons for that?

(1) Thanks to his good health, Vranitzky is still alive and active.

(2) The thirty-year-rule of state archival access which is still in force should surely be mentioned, even if it cannot be used as an excuse, because there are enough other important sources available.

(3) Austrian contemporary historians are not very keen on what French historians call *histoire du temps présent* and the British "current history". There are hardly any major research projects on the four most-recent decades of the Austrian Second Republic from the 1970s to the first decade of the twenty-first century.

(4) Another reason may be that Vranitzky has often been viewed in the shadow of one of his famous predecessors, Chancellor Bruno Kreisky (1970-1983), who

headed a single party government with three absolute majorities (in 1971, 1975 and 1979). Therefore, it is not so clear as to whether one can speak about a "Vranitzky era" in the same way as we do when talking about "the Kreisky era".

(5) In times of the so-called "post-modernity" including historiographies and the so-called *Zeitgeist*, the "state of the art" may seem to be "normal", but in reality it is a further proof that Austrian contemporary history is an incomplete discipline.[1] No source-related and modern scholarly biography of any Austrian Chancellor of the Second Republic has been written to date by a professional contemporary Austrian historian!

In spite of the fact that no monograph has been published on Vranitzky up to now, there are some important publications by Austrian journalists,[2] family members, and friends,[3] as well as one serious collection[4] and, last but not least, his own memoirs to be used as a basis.[5]

What does the fact, that Vranitzky is still alive imply for biographical research and for the choice of methods? The answer is closely related to oral history. Three reasons are to be mentioned here:

(1) oral history must not only be seen as a minor ("secondary") method for obtaining additional historical information, but also

(2) as an important way to produce new sources;

(3) oral history can be used as a means of confidence-building and as a door opener to written "primary sources".[6]

1. See T. ANGERER, *An Incomplete Discipline. Austrian Zeitgeschichte and Recent History*, in: *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, 3(1994), pp.207-251.
2. H. RAUSCHER, *Vranitzky. Eine Chance*, Ueberreuter, Vienna, 1987; K. KRAWAGNA-PFEIFER, R. SEMOTAN, *Die Vranitzky-Jahre*, Austria Medien Service, Graz, 1996.
3. F. VRANITZKY, *Die ersten 10 Jahre*, D & R Verlag, Vienna, 1997; C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), *Ein großer Europäer. Weggefährten über Franz Vranitzky*, Löcker, Vienna, 2007.
4. G. BISCHOF, A. PELINKA, F. KARLHOFER (eds), *The Vranitzky Era in Austria* (Contemporary Austrian Studies, vol.7), Transaction Publisher, New Brunswick/New Jersey, 1999. This volume is important for a better understanding of the Vranitzky years, but interestingly enough without any article about international relations, foreign policy and European integration policy.
5. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, Paul Zsolnay Verlag, Vienna, 2004.
6. When completing my studies in 2005-06 on Austria's attempts to join the European Union, I seized the opportunity to meet Vranitzky at a conference organized by the Schumpeter-Gesellschaft at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts in April 2006, where the former chancellor was invited as a speaker of honor. On that occasion, he was willing to grant me a long and open-minded interview. Interview with Chancellor Franz Vranitzky at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachussets on 6 April 2006 (recording in possession of the author). A second interview followed at the Bruno Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue at the Kreisky Villa in the Armbrustergasse in Vienna the same month, where I could ask new questions and deepen my knowledge about Vranitzky's European and integration policies on 20 April 2006. I am very grateful to Dr. Vranitzky for these opportunities to discuss his life and his policies.

The personal, face-to-face conversations contributed to a sort of confidence-building. With the permission of Vranitzky, I was also able to obtain access to his private archives, which are located in the Bruno Kreisky Archives Foundation in Vienna. The conscious choice of the methodological approach represents a combination between oral history, archive documents, and his written memoirs. After this, Vranitzky was also willing to provide answers to final questions via e-mail correspondence. As a result of these varied sources, this article will highlight aspects of Vranitzky's policies towards Europe and European integration.

II. From a Working-Class Family to the Treasury Department

1. Personal Background

Franz Vranitzky was born in Vienna on 4 October 1937 and grew up with his sister, Inge, in humble circumstances in Hernals, the 17th district of Vienna. He was the son of a foundry worker who was first a social democrat before going over to the Communists and who was unemployed between the two World Wars. Franz's mother came from a large family from the Austrian province of Burgenland and had moved to Vienna to work as a domestic servant. In 1962, Franz Vranitzky married Christine Christen, with whom he went on to have two children: Robert and Claudia. At times, Vranitzky wondered what sort of roots could be ascribed to his children. His wife's mother came from a family from Lower Austria, while her father had a Scandinavian family background. Vranitzky's own mother stemmed from a family with clear Croatian roots, whereas his father's family had come from Bohemia through České Budějovice (Budweis) to Vienna in the nineteenth century.[7]

2. Educational Background and Private Activities

Through the course of his upbringing, "Europe" did not play any role. During the Second World War and in the postwar period, his parents were confronted with problems of everyday life.

At secondary school, history became one of his favourite subjects. His teacher had an international orientation, and Vranitzky later called him an "internationalist". For his graduation examination, he chose history as his main subject. The main topic which he had to discuss was "Efforts at world peace – from the Pax Augusta to the foundation of the United Nations". He finished with his Matura graduation diploma

7. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp.15-17, biographical dates also in: F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch mit Armin Thurnher*, Eichborn, Frankfurt/Main, 1992, pp.203-205.

in May 1955, at a time when Austria along with the four occupation powers signed the State Treaty and some months later joined the UN.[8]

After graduating from the *Realgymnasium Geblergasse* in Vienna in 1955, Vranitzky studied business management at the *Hochschule für Welthandel* in Vienna. At the same time, he worked as a Latin and English tutor as well as a construction worker. In 1960, he completed his studies as a business school graduate. As a young man, he played for several years in the Austrian national basketball team, which failed to qualify for the XVII Summer Olympic Games in Rome. During this period as an athlete, he travelled to many European countries (Italy, France, Spain, and Germany, as well as countries in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe).

At that time, these journeys gave the young Vranitzky the opportunity to gather many impressions and experiences from abroad. It was at first through sports that he took on an international orientation and finally also became "European". Vranitzky's relationship with sports positively influenced his idea of "Europe". It also contributed to develop his way of thinking within European dimensions.

3. Professional, Political, and International Networks

In 1961, Vranitzky briefly worked for *Siemens-Schuckert* in Vienna in the bookkeeping department, before moving on in the same year to the *Oesterreichische Nationalbank* (the Austrian National Bank, or OeNB), where he remained until 1970. He joined the Austrian Socialist Party in 1962, and one year later, he completed his military service in the Austrian armed forces (the *Bundesheer*). When he started at the OeNB, he was interested in obtaining in due time a position with an international connection, and it was not too long before one of his dreams came true: he became active within the Foreign Affairs Section of the OeNB, especially in the national economy section, where he was responsible for North America. Most intensive contacts were established with the USA, but also with the UK, the Netherlands, and the OECD in Paris. In the United States, Vranitzky worked at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Federal Reserve System (the Federal Reserve Board in Washington DC and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York).[9]

It is very clear that Vranitzky's educational and personal political background contributed to an internationalization which also shaped his ideas of "Europe", but he always had a broader, global view of European integration.

When working at the OeNB, he was judged very positively. In a job evaluation, his knowledge of foreign languages (English and French) was mentioned.[10]

8. Personal written statements by Dr. Franz VRANITZKY to the author, 5 June 2008, p.1.
9. Ibid.
10. K. LIEBSCHER, *Österreichs Integration in die EU*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.131-138, here pp.131-132.

In 1969, Vranitzky obtained his doctorate in international business administration, and the following year he became an advisor to Finance Minister Hannes Androsch (SPÖ) in the government of Chancellor Bruno Kreisky. In 1976, he became deputy general director of the *Creditanstalt-Bankverein*, and in 1981 he was named general director. Starting that same year, he also served as deputy general director and member of the board of directors of the *Österreichische Länderbank* until 1984, when Chancellor Fred Sinowatz brought him into the government as Minister of Finance. He was publicly criticized in connection with repeated dealings with his earlier functions in institutions that were closely associated with the state.

III. Political Challenges

1. The Waldheim Crisis and Haider's Right-Wing Populism

Vranitzky's chancellorship was a product of the Waldheim crisis.[11] During the federal presidential elections of 1986, Sinowatz spoke out vehemently against the candidate of the *Österreichische Volkspartei* (Austrian People's Party, or ÖVP), Kurt Waldheim, the former secretary-general of the United Nations (1971-1982). After the latter's election on 8 June, Sinowatz resigned and recommended Vranitzky as his successor. When the rather outgoing Vranitzky first came to power as chancellor, he was dubbed the "pinstripe socialist", a reference to his favoured form of suit after many years as one of the country's leading bankers. He accepted the election as chancellor out of political conviction and at first continued the coalition with the *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs* (the Austrian Freedom Party, or FPÖ) under its liberal party chairman Norbert Steger. However, when Jörg Haider was elected new national party chairman of the FPÖ with the help of his German-nationalist supporters at the party congress in Innsbruck on 13 September 1986, Vranitzky ended the coalition with the

11. Kurt Waldheim, the former Austrian diplomat and Foreign Minister (1968-70) and Secretary General of the United Nations (1971-82), was accused by the World Jewish Congress of being a war criminal while serving as an officer of the German Wehrmacht during World War II in the Balkans, in order to prevent him from running for President during the elections of 1986. In spite of the accusations from abroad and criticism within Austria, he was nevertheless elected. During his presidency (1986-1992), he was completely isolated at the level of international politics. The Austrian government decided to set up an International Historians Commission in 1988 which was to examine the case. It came to the conclusion that Waldheim did in fact know about these war crimes, such as the persecution of the Jews, but was not personally responsible for them. He was in no way in a position to give such orders. Up to now, no historical document has been found which could confirm that he had been a war criminal. See M. GEHLER, *„... eine grotesk überzogene Dämonisierung eines Mannes ..." Die Waldheim-Affäre 1986-1992*, in: M. GEHLER, H. SICKINGER (eds), *Politische Skandale und Affären in Österreich. Von Mayerling bis Waldheim*, Kulturverlag/Thaur, Vienna/Munich, 1995, reprinted Studienverlag, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2007, pp.614-665.

"Freedom" Party the very next day. The Austrian Parliament, the *Nationalrat*, was dissolved.[12]

After the new elections held on 23 November 1986, the SPÖ emerged once again as the strongest party. Vranitzky formed a new cabinet in January 1987 with the former opposition party, the ÖVP. On 11 May 1988, he also followed Sinowatz in the role of the SPÖ national party chairman. At this *Sonderparteitag* (extraordinary party assembly), he received 94% of the party delegates' votes. In terms of domestic policy, Vranitzky was faced with growing opposition from the FPÖ, which began to operate in an increasingly right-wing populist manner. He paid strict attention to keeping his distance from Haider and his unbridled (out-of-control) politics, which in the later years of Vranitzky's office was criticized as "exclusion".[13]

At the end of the 1990s, this strategy was only effective to a very limited extent due to Haider's growing electoral success, and particularly since willingness was growing in the ÖVP to form a coalition with the right-wing populist FPÖ.

With respect to foreign policy in these years, Vranitzky was also confronted from 1986 to 1992 with the seemingly endless debate about Waldheim's wartime past and the associated diplomatic and political isolation of Austria (the president did not receive one single invitation for a state visit from any of the twelve member nations of the EC, in spite of the fact that Foreign Minister Alois Mock [ÖVP, 1987-1995] defended and recommended him fanatically).[14]

At that time when Austria was viewed as a "Nazi country",[15] Vranitzky thus repeatedly took over tasks of representation which in fact belonged to the duties of the president. In that respect, the chancellor was successful in soothing and normalizing both the battered relations with the USA, which in April 1987 had put Waldheim on the "watch list" of people declared *persona non grata* to prohibit him from entering the country, and the strained relations with Israel, which had recalled its Ambassador after Waldheim's election.[16]

With regard to this context, Oliver Rathkolb described Vranitzky as a "crisis manager and organizer within the Austrian history policy".[17] The Chancellor's speech before the *Nationalrat* on 8 July 1991 caused a sensation.[18] Although he did not retract

12. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp.157-161.
13. H. CZERNIN, *Der Haider-Macher. Franz Vranitzky und das Ende der alten Republik*, Ibera & Molden Verlag, Vienna, 1997.
14. Interview with Dr. Franz VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006 at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
15. H.P. WASSERMANN, *Naziland Österreich!? Studien zu Antisemitismus, Nation und Nationalsozialismus im öffentlichen Meinungsbild*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2002, pp.176-187.
16. M. GEHLER, *„... eine grotesk überzogene Dämonisierung ...*, op.cit., pp.614-665.
17. O. RATHKOLB, *Krisenmanager und Gestalter in der österreichischen Geschichtspolitik*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.183-190, here pp.185-186; O. RATHKOLB, *The paradoxical Republic. Austria 1945-2005*, Berghahn, New York/Oxford, 2005, pp.124-126.
18. E. NOWOTNY, *Vom Parteifreund zum Freund*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.153-156.

the official thesis of Austria as the "first victim of Hitler's aggression" of 1938, he did qualify it in relative terms. Above all else, though, he did concede that Austria had a share in the blame for the Second World War and its consequences, including its responsibility for fellow citizens having committed crimes during wartime. Vranitzky therefore contributed to a differentiation between the former Austrian state and parts of its population which still existed. From March 1938 to the end of World War II, the Austrian state had ceased to exist, but there were Austrians who were involved in atrocities and persecutions carried out by Nazi Germany. Vranitzky was concerned about these facts and felt a kind of moral responsibility. His speech in the Austrian Parliament on 8 July 1991 became famous.[19] And for the first time ever, an Austrian Chancellor visited Israel. During his state visit, Vranitzky gave a famous speech on 9 June 1993 in which, in the name of the Austrian Republic, he asked the victims of Austrian Nazi perpetrators for forgiveness. On one hand, he rejected to accept a sort of "collective guilt" which Austria as a whole would have to assume, but on the other hand, he spoke about a kind of "moral responsibility" because many Austrians had welcomed the *Anschluss* of 1938, supported the Nazi regime, and contributed to its functioning.[20]

Within this context, Vranitzky received two awards: an honorary doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for "his courageous statements on Austria's shared guilt in Nazi crimes", and the Gold Medal from the Jewish organization *B'nai B'rith* for "his commitment to the reappraisal of Austria's history since 1945 and for his close relationship to the Jewish community". The Austrian journalist Hans Rauscher described Vranitzky as "the first anti-Nazi Chancellor" of Austria,[21] and Brigitte Ederer, former Undersecretary of State for European Affairs, saw Vranitzky as an "antifascist by conviction".[22]

2. Emerging "Europe": The Attractiveness of the Single Market Project 1987-1989

On 16 January 1987, an agreement was signed in order to form a new Austrian federal government for the duration of the seventeenth legislative period. Chancellor Vran-

19. M. JOCHUM, *80 Jahre Republik*, Ketterl Verlag, Vienna 1998, p.165.
20. T. ALBRICH, *„Es gibt keine jüdische Frage". Zur Auferstehung des österreichischen Opfermythos*, in: R. STEININGER (ed.) with the assistance of I. BÖHLER, *Der Umgang mit dem Holocaust. Europa-USA-Israel*, Studienverlag, Vienna/Cologne, 1994, pp.147-166, here pp.165-166 (quotations from the speech); critical towards Vranitzky's speech in Israel 1993 because – according to Steiner – Waldheim would have stressed earlier Austria's responsibilty towards her Nazi past: L. STEINER, *Diplomatie – Politik. Ein Leben für die Einheit Tirols. Ein Leben für Österreich 1972-2007*, Athesia-Tyrolia, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2008, p.328.
21. H. RAUSCHER, *Der erste anti-nationalsozialistische Bundeskanzler*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.191-195.
22. Antifaschist aus Überzeugung, see B. EDERER, *Österreicher, Europäer, Sozialdemokrat*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.43-47, here pp.46-47.

itzky did indeed intend to improve relations with the European Community, but for reasons of neutrality policy, he did not consider full membership. Under Vranitzky's aegis, the SPÖ followed a course of "capitalist modernization" with the efficiency of the market taking precedence over the social democratic model.[23] One may perceive in this change of course a break in the position of the SPÖ leadership and the alignment of the system of the Second Republic which found political expression in the growing desire for rapprochement with the EC. "In 1988, the intention to take a decision began to mature", Vranitzky stressed for himself personally, looking back at his European aspirations.[24] But he did not consider Austria's application for EC membership as a break with its past. Rather, it had to be seen in a strategy of continuity, because the EC application opened up new possibilities for the economic and political development of Austria in Europe.[25]

At the same time as he started to prepare Austria's approach to the EEC, Vranitzky also re-established good relations with neutral Switzerland. In Berne he let the Swiss Federal President Otto Stich know that Austria's permanent neutrality should not be violated in case of a possible EC membership, because it was an integral part of the Austrian state and its society. He maintained that Austria's neutral status would be compatible with membership in the coming Single Market ("EC 92") and with the political expectations in Brussels. Vranitzky underlined that there should not be any rivalry on that issue with Switzerland. In an official Swiss announcement it was stated:

> "L'Autriche entend participer d'une manière ou d'une autre au futur marché européen de 1992, a aussi noté M. Vranitzky. Vienne s'y attache actuellement en axant sa politique sur trois points: le rapprochement multilatéral, par le biais d'organisations telle que l'AELE – dont la Suisse est également membre –, le rapprochement bilatéral entre Vienne et Bruxelles et enfin par une adaptation de la législation autrichienne à celle des autres pays européens.
>
> Evoquant la neutralité, que beaucoup avancent en Suisse pour rejeter une adhésion à la CEE, M. Vranitzky estime qu'elle pourrait être garantie sans trop de problèmes à l'intérieur du marché commun. Il a toutefois ajouté que d'autres questions étaient prioritaires. D'autre

23. M.A. SULLY, *Continuity and Change in Austrian Socialism*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1982; J. CAP, *Sozialdemokratie im Wandel*, Jugend & Volk, Vienna, 1989.
24. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; in November 1986 the new Chancellor Vranitzky argued that Austria should seek a „quasi membership" in the EC, but because of it's neutrality full membership would not be possible, see P. LUIF, *On the road to Brussels. The Political Dimension of Austria's, Finland's and Sweden's Accession to the European Union* (The Laxenburg Papers 11), Braumüller, Vienna, 1995, p.189.
25. Interview with VRANITZKY, 6.4.2006; with regard to the establishment by the SPÖ of a European position, see *EG-Mitgliedschaft Österreichs als „klarste Form der vollen Teilnahme am Binnenmarkt"*, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 07.04.1989; with regard to the emphasis on neutrality, see *Grundlinien für Österreichs EG-Antrag. Unterzeichnung eines Übereinkommens. Einigung über Verhandlungsführung und politische Koordination*, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 28.06.1989.

part, parler de la neutralité actuellement n'a guère de sens dans la mesure où l'Europe n'a pas encore défini clairement sa politique en matière de sécurité et de défense".[26]

The often-cited "letter to Brussels" of 14 July 1989 which Foreign Minister Alois Mock submitted three days later contained, along with the actual application an explicit reservation regarding the status of neutrality that was closely linked to that document. This letter was anything but undisputed from the point of view of domestic policy, that is, not only between the government and the opposition, but also within the coalition, especially between Vranitzky and Mock.[27]

Neutrality was expressly mentioned in the application. Vranitzky's influence on the choice of the formulation of this clause had prevailed. The possibility of continuing Austria's neutrality policy in the future was a matter of concern for the chancellor. Viewed in this way, this reservation was "the result of serious and careful contemplation". The socialists wanted to continue Austria's neutrality policy without wavering. The right of neutrality was less frightening for the political elites than the policy of neutrality. The controversy between the two parties regarding the contents of the application revolved around the formulation of the neutrality question. In that regard, this controversy was definitely an expression above all of matters of rank and a clash of responsibility between the foreign Minister and the chancellor. European integration was considered by Mock as a matter of foreign relations and thus falling within the area of responsibility of the Foreign Ministry, while Vranitzky regarded this as an overall policy question that ranged beyond departmental divisions and re-

26. Quoted from *Visite du Chancelier autrichien en Suisse: relations sans nuage – La Suisse et l'Autriche placées devant un même défi: l'Europe*; see also Stiftung Bruno Kreisky Archiv (StBKA), BK Vranitzky/AP, Staatsbesuche 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, Offizieller Besuch des HBK in der Schweiz, 1./2. Februar 1988, Information des BMfaA für den Herrn Bundeskanzler, und Entwurf Ministertreffen zwischen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft, ihren Mitgliedern und den Staaten der Europäischen Freihandelszone (Binnenmarktfragen), am 2. Februar 1988 in Brüssel. Gemeinsame Erklärung; *Nüchterner Veränderer ohne Waldheim-Touch. Besuch des österreichischen Bundeskanzlers Franz Vranitzky in der Schweiz: Haltung gegenüber EG als gemeinsames Problem*, in: *Der Bund*, 01.02.1988; *Bankier, Bundeskanzler und Sozialist dazu*, in: *Berner Zeitung*, 01.02.1988; *Österreichs Kanzler in Bern: EG 1992 als gemeinsame Sorge*, in: *Basler Zeitung*, 01.02.1988; *Vranitzky à Berne: pour parler "Europe". Selon le premier ministre autrichien, Bruxelles ne se fait pas de souci pour accepter les particularités des neutres*, in: *Tribune de Genève*, 02.02.1988; *Neutral, aber mit Option auf EG-Beitritt.Österreichs Bundeskanzler Vranitzky unterhielt sich mit Bundespräsident Stich über Europapolitik*, in: *Der Bund*, 02.02.1988; *Der Besuch von Bundeskanzler Vranitzky. Europäische Integration als Hauptthema*, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 02.02.1988; see also P. LUIF, *On the road to Brussels*, op.cit., p.242.

27. M. SCHEICH, *Tabubruch. Österreichs Entscheidung für die Europäische Union*, Böhlau Verlag, Vienna/Cologne, 2005, pp.63-73; M. EICHTINGER, H. WOHNOUT, *Alois Mock. Ein Politiker schreibt Geschichte*, Styria Verlag, Vienna, 2008, pp.167-189; with regard to the controversy about the neutrality reservation, also see F. FISCHLER, *Franz Vranitzky zum 70er*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.63-67, here p.65.

quired the coordination responsibility of the Federal Chancellery.[28] Not only did the chancellor assert himself, he also triumphed in the long run: through the European Council, the heads of state and heads of government received a sort of authority in general policy matters with regard to matters of European policy, while as a result of this, the foreign ministers had to accept a loss in rank.[29]

What were the reasons for Austria's application for full EC membership in 1989?[30] In 1992, three years before the actual accession, Vranitzky was asked this question by an Austrian journalist, and mentioned several motives: there would be no alternative for his country – European integration would move forward anyhow – be it with Austria taking an active part or not; a non-accession or a special agreement with the Communities would be of no real benefit; whereas both sides could profit from closer relations, and not just within the framework of the EC; the project of "Europe" would also mean closer links and ties between the European populations. European Integration would not only be an economic or political task but also a cultural one. Last but not least, European integration that was achieved would also have to be seen within a context of peace in a world with increasing threats.[31]

In the Harvard interview, Vranitzky stressed economy as having been the first reason for joining the EU. From the perspective of foreign economy policy, Austria was at that time the most integrated country compared to all the other applicants (Finland, Norway and Sweden). Trade relations with the European Union (in which Germany had a large share) made up two thirds of Austria's total volume of foreign trade). The necessity for domestic reforms as an argument for joining the Common Market was also an economic motive, with regard to modernization and privatization of Austria's economy.[32]

For both Vranitzky and Mock, one pressing political motive for joining can be seen in the purpose to "maintain greater freedom of movement within the EU". A

28. StBKA, Private Papers Bundeskanzler Franz Vranitzky, Box EG-Regierung, Dr. Franz Vranitzky, Vorsitzender der SPÖ an "Liebe Genossin! Lieber Genosse!", 31.03.1989 und Österreich in Europa. Bericht des Parteivorsitzenden an das Parteipräsidium und den Bundesvorstand, 03.04.1989, pp. 1-19, here pp.11-12. See also *"EG-Mitgliedschaft Österreichs als klarste Form der vollen Teilnahme am Binnenmarkt." Die Festlegung der SPÖ auf eine Europa-Position*, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 07.04.1989; M. GEHLER, *Vom Marshall-Plan zur EU. Österreich und die europäische Integration von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2006, pp.170-173 and 212-215; Interview with Vranitzky, 06.04.2006; Interview with the former Austrian Ambassador to Brussels and Permanent Representative Dr. Manfred SCHEICH, 28.09.2004.
29. Concerning the conflicts between Chancellery and Foreign Ministry and the tug of war within the coalition government see: G. KUNNERT, *Österreichs Weg in die Europäische Union. Ein Kleinstaat ringt um eine aktive Rolle im europäischen Integrationsprozeß*, Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, Vienna, 1993, pp.140-147 and 160-163.
30. This is just mentioned by P. GROSSER, *1989. L'année où le monde a basculé*, Perrin, Paris 2009, pp.44-45.
31. F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch …*, op.cit., pp.48-49.
32. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; M. SCHEICH, op.cit., pp.31-32; to the facts of Austria's Eastern Europe-foreign trade see: F. Breuss, *Die österreichische Wirtschaft seit der Ostöffnung*, in D. STIEFEL (ed.), *Der "Ostfaktor". Die österreichische Wirtschaft 1989-2009*, Böhlau, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2009, pp.115-157.

"feeling of isolation" that was becoming ever more threatening had even spread to leading SPÖ politicians and, as a result of this, they showed a growing willingness towards accession to the community. Austria's ambassador to Brussels, Manfred Scheich (ÖVP), included among these socialist and socialdemocrat politicians former Finance Minister Hannes Androsch, Undersecretary for Europe Peter Jankowitsch, Finance Minister Ferdinand Lacina, and last but not least Chancellor Franz Vranitzky himself.[33]

As a result of the great dependence upon Germany in terms of trade policy and thus also in economic terms, memories of recent history stirred fears of a "cold *Anschluss*"[34] and the "German way" in the public debate,[35] misgivings to which even Vranitzky was not unsusceptible, although in public, he quickly sought to dispel them.[36]

In the time before and also after the Iron Curtain was lifted, "Central Europe" never became a big issue for Vranitzky from the point of view of foreign affairs. In his first years as Chancellor, he acted in a very state-oriented manner towards the centre of Europe and its countries. His actions were linked to the acceptance of the political status quo. Like Bruno Kreisky, he continued to maintain correct relations on different bilateral levels with the socialist governments and their communist leaders. At the same time, the Vice Mayor of Vienna and later on Minister for Science and Education (and later on Vice Chancellor) Erhard Busek (ÖVP), strongly in favour of certain Austrian idea of "Mitteleuropa",[37] established excellent contacts with various opposition groups and their intellectual and political leaders in those countries lying behind the Iron Curtain. Before 1989, Vranitzky did not develop a concept of *Mitteleuropa* either politically or culturally.[38] For him, this was more a title than a

33. Interview with Ambassador Manfred SCHEICH, 12.12.2002; also see M. SCHEICH, op.cit., p.31; Interview with Austria's Minister of Finance (1986-1995) Ferdinand LACINA, 14.06.2012.
34. M. SCHERB, I. MORAWETZ (eds), *In deutscher Hand? Österreich und sein großer Nachbar*, Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, Vienna, 1990 and M. SCHERB, *Die Europäische Gemeinschaft – Objekt österreichischer Begierden. Zum Charakter der Europäischen Gemeinschaft und den österreichischen Beitrittswünschen*, in: M. SCHERB, I. MORAWETZ, *Der un-heimliche Anschluß. Österreich und die EG*, Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, Vienna, 1988, pp.47-72.
35. H. THALBERG, *Von der Kunst, ein Österreicher zu sein. Erinnerungen und Tagebuchnotizen*, Böhlau Verlag, Vienna/Cologne, 1984, pp.505 sqq.; F. TRAXLER, *Das Ende des 'Österreichischen Weges?*, in: J. FELDHOFF, G. KÜHLEWIND, C. WEHRSIG, H. WIESENTHAL (eds), *Regulierung-Deregulierung. Steuerungsprobleme der Arbeitsgesellschaft*, IAB, Nuremberg, 1988.
36. *Keine Angst vor "Heim ins Reich." Österreich in einem Europa des Umbruchs – Ein ZEIT-Gespräch mit Bundeskanzler Franz Vranitzky*, in: *Die Zeit*, 26.10.1990.
37. Concerning „Mitteleuropa" and the German Question and Austria and „Mitteleuropa" see: E. BUSEK, E. BRIX, *Projekt Mitteleuropa*, Ueberreuter, Vienna, 1986, pp.42-57 and 60-75.
38. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; concerning the critical and very reluctant position of Vranitzky vis-à-vis the idea of Mitteleuropa see: V. MARJANOVIC, *Die Mitteleuropa-Idee und die Mitteleuropa-Politik Österreichs 1945-1995*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/Berlin, 1998, pp.115, 129, 150; see in general P. KATZENSTEIN (ed.), *Mitteleuropa. Between Europe and Germany*, Berghahn, Oxford, 1997; concerning Kreisky's foreign policy see E. RÖHRLICH, *Kreiskys Außenpolitik. Zwischen österreichischer Identität und internationalem Programm* (Zeitgeschichte im Kontext 2), University Press, Vienna, 2009, pp.270-342.

thoughtful strategic choice of opening up these countries, while Busek viewed "Central Europe" as a substantial programme combined with the support of civil societies and an evolutionary concept leading to political change in those countries.[39]

In 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia proclaimed their rights of self-determination, the leaders of the Austrian government were divided on that question. While Foreign Minister Alois Mock supported the emancipation of both partial republics and also pushed German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher to accept the independence of Croatia and Slovenia from Belgrade, Vranitzky took a different position in favour of keeping Yugoslavia together and preserving the political status quo in the Balkans. In the end, it was Mock who prevailed over the Austrian Chancellor – with all of the well-known consequences.[40]

3. The Shadow of the Emerging German Question 1989-1990

Among the main focuses of Vranitzky's foreign policy – in particular, after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the so called "real socialism" – were the maintenance and intensification of contacts with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as the preparation for and implementation of Austria's accession to the European Communities, later the European Union, on which he cooperated with Foreign Minister and Vice Chancellor Alois Mock to the highest possible extent. This was not easy, though, because Mock was very ambitious and busy, and he wanted to keep the foreign policy domain far away from the Federal Chancellery.[41]

That is the reason why Vranitzky was not primarily concerned about developing, visions for the centre of Europe and "Central Europe". Nor did he think of taking it up, after 1989/90, as a main objective in his European policy, as he frankly confessed.[42] However, this statement did not mean that he turned exclusively towards Western Europe. Quite the opposite was true. He also wanted to include the Eastern parts of Europe into his conception of a wider, greater and unified Europe.[43]

In actuality, Vranitzky did not accept political advice from the outside, such as when Italy's Prime Minister Bettino Craxi recommended that Austria should enter the Communities in order to achieve a better containment of German dominance (sic!)

39. Personal statements VRANITZKY, p.3; also see F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch …*, op.cit., p.75; see also the Vranitzky-interview with Peter Pelinka *„Mitteleuropa hat praktisch keine politische Bedeutung"*, in: *Neue Arbeiterzeitung*, 23.12.1989.
40. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp.345-366; H.-D. GENSCHER, *Erinnerungen*, Siedler, Berlin, 1995, pp.934, 936, 938 and 940; M. EICHTINGER, H. WOHNOUT, op.cit., pp.205-229.
41. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; see StBKA, Private Papers Bundeskanzler Franz Vranitzky, Box EG-Regierung, Controversial correspondence Vranitzky to Mock, 02.12.1988 and Mock to Vranitzky, 04.12.1988.
42. F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch …*, op.cit., pp.48-94, here p.86.
43. Ibid., p.49.

within the EC, or when Germany's Chancellor Helmut Kohl instructed his Austrian counterpart to push his country's membership in order to reduce the influence of Mediterranean and Southern European member states![44]

In contrast to the seasoned politician Kreisky, Vranitzky followed the process of German unification with expectant scepticism and dampened euphoria. It was only later on that he showed a positive response.[45] At the beginning, he still attempted to support the East German reform regime under Hans Modrow. On 24 November 1989, as the first Western statesman, he made a visit to the transformed GDR, and in January 1990 Modrow returned his visit to Vienna.[46]

This was one reason among others – for example, the existing close relationships between ÖVP politicians such as Mock and Schüssel with Kohl (CDU) – as to why Vranitzky's relationship to Kohl was not completely free of atmospheric disturbances and party political reservations.[47] Because of these ties between the ÖVP politicians and Kohl, Austria's Chancellor was suspicious about the issue of a NATO membership, which was not only discussed, but strongly favoured by the ÖVP and continuously rejected by Vranitzky.[48]

In earlier days, on the other hand, such as in 1987 on the occasion of his state visit to Bonn, he had asked for Kohl's support for Austria's EC approach (which he had

44. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006.
45. F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch …*, op.cit., pp.88-89; T. SOMMER, *Österreich, Deutschland und darüber hinaus*, in: F. VRANITZKY, *Die ersten 10 Jahre*, op.cit., pp. 151-152; Interview with VRANITZKY, 20.04.2006.
46. M. GEHLER, *Eine Außenpolitik der Anpassung an veränderte Umstände: Österreich und die Vereinigung Bundesrepublik Deutschland-DDR 1989/90*, in: M. GEHLER, I. BÖHLER (eds), *Verschiedene europäische Wege im Vergleich. Österreich und die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945/49 bis zur Gegenwart. Festschrift für Rolf Steininger zum 65. Geburtstag*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2007, pp.493-530, here pp.498-503 and 506-511; recently M. GRAF, *Österreich und die DDR 1949-1989. Beziehungen – Kontakte – Wahrnehmungen*, PhD. University of Vienna 2012, pp.818-822.
47. This assessment was confirmed by the Austrian envoy, Dr. Senta WESSELY-STEINER, Interview, 11.07.2002. M. EICHTINGER, H. WOHNOUT, op.cit., pp.92-93 and 148-152; W. SCHÜSSEL, *Offengelegt. Aufgezeichnet von Alexander Purger*, Ecowin Verlag, Salzburg, 2009, pp. 36-38, 71-72 and 279-281.
48. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; in 1995 Vranitzky was opposing Austria's joining a NATO-led peace operation, whereas Foreign Minister Wolfgang Schüssel (ÖVP) resolutely supported such an Austrian military participation, see P. LUIF, *On the road to Brussels*, op.cit., p.369.

received),[49] and he also remained in direct contact with the German Chancellor when the EU negotiations had to be concluded in 1994. Vranitzky and Kohl acted along a common line in a kind of informal "agreement". Vranitzky succeeded in convincing Kohl that it would be better to make no public statement of support concerning Austria's EU accession in order to avoid suspicions of "*Anschluss*" on the part of other EU member states. From an Austrian diplomatic/politically-correct point of view, public recommendations by the German Chancellor were not really desirable.[50]

As the shadow of German unity faded and new basic conditions came into place with the EU's Maastricht Treaty, Austria had to reformulate and intensify its application for full membership in the EU in 1992. During his period as national chairman of the SPÖ, which had begun in 1988, Vranitzky maintained contacts with top officials among European social democrats and socialists at government level. To a large extent though, he left it up to the president of the *Nationalrat*, Heinz Fischer, and to Peter Schieder (both SPÖ members) to maintain contacts with the Socialist International (SI), in spite of the fact that he was a Vice President of the SI[51] (the president was Willy Brandt, but during Vranitzky's period as Chancellor no fewer than twenty-six (!) Vice Presidents were active within the SI).

Since his assumption of office as Chancellor on 16 June 1986, Vranitzky had successfully established common ground on a step-by-step basis at the institutional and personal level among European social democrats in office, by seizing on the objective of EC accession and considering the European Economic Space (EES) as a suitable interim step. For Vranitzky, this integration model proposed by the EC Commission's President Jacques Delors was nothing more than a transitory solution.[52]

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49. „Wir möchten unseren Schritt in Richtung EG nicht nur aus der Perspektive der bilateralen Handelsmöglichkeiten betrachten, sondern auch als einen Beitrag Österreichs zu einem integrierten Europa", in: C.G. STRÖHM, *Vranitzy sucht in Bonn Beistand für Verhandlungen mit der EG*, in: *Die Welt*, 01.11.1987; *Kohl und Vranitzky sprechen über Österreichs Rolle in Europa. Wien fordert Beteiligung am EG-Binnenmarkt/Verkehrsfrage*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 05.11.1987; *Wien sucht in Bonn Rückendeckung in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, in: *Handelsblatt*, 03.11.1987; *Vranitzky sucht in Bonn Beistand für Verhandlungen mit der EG*, in: *Die Welt*, 04.11.1987; *Österreich nimmt Anlauf in Richtung Gemeinschaft. Bundeskanzler Vranitzky besucht Bonn als eine von zwölf Hauptstädten der EG*, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 04.11.1987; *Wien liebäugelt mit der EG. Vranitzky hofft auf Bonner Hilfe/Erster Staatsbesuch*, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 05.11.1987; *Vranitzky nennt EG-Beitritt möglich. Österreichs Bundeskanzler: Neutralität kein Hindernis*, in: *Generalanzeiger*, 06.11.1987; *Bonn sagt Österreich die Unterstützung für eine Einbeziehung in den EG-Binnenmarkt zu*, in: *Vorarlberger Nachrichten*, 06.11.1987; *Wien erhält Bonner Unterstützung für EG-Pläne. Vranitzky schließt Vollmitgliedschaft Österreichs in der Gemeinschaft nicht aus – Gespräch mit Kohl*, in: *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 06.11.1987; *Vranitzky schließt EG-Mitgliedschaft nicht aus*, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 06.11.1987.
50. Interview VRANITZKY, 20.04.2006.
51. M. GEHLER, *On the Long and Winding Road to European Union Membership: Austrian Party Elites in Transnational Political Networks*, in: W. KAISER, B. LEUCHT, M. GEHLER (eds), *Transnational Networks in Regional Integration. Governing Europe 1945-83*, Palgrave, Houndmills/Basingstoke, 2010, pp.199-220, here pp.206-207.
52. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006.

In a speech before the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 17 January 1989, Delors had proposed that concept of a wider EES in order to consolidate first the integration process of core Western Europe, which lead to the home market project for the 12 EC member states. Future EC candidates would thus have to wait for entry negotiations until the time when the Single Market would be achieved, which occurred on 1 January 1993.[53] One month later, the negotiations with Austria, Finland, Sweden, and Norway could finally begin.

The agreement on standpoints and cooperation among the four EFTA countries of Finland, Norway, Sweden and Austria showed itself in the setting up of a network of state participants which was made up of the social democratic heads of government of the four EC candidate countries – Paavo Lipponen, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Ingvar Carlsson and Franz Vranitzky, politicians who were on friendly terms with one another according to Vranitzky. Willy Claes and Wim Kok were also close friends of him. Vranitzky received support for his EC policy from the former "Confederation of Socialist Parties of the European Community", the grouping of all the Socialist parties of the EC member states and the forerunner of the Socialist Party of Europe (SPE), which was a strong group with influential politicians (Giuliano Amato, Felipe Gonzales, Antonio Guterres, Neill Kinnock and Wim Kok). Due to its activities, the SPÖ was already part of that group before Austria's accession to the EU.[54]

According to Erhard Busek, Vranitzky had no direct access to François Mitterrand during the completion of the membership negotiations in 1994.[55] Yet Vranitzky qualified Mitterrand as a "strong person whom to turn to". In the years from 1989 to 1993, the Austrian chancellor gradually succeeded in convincing Mitterrand to accept Austria's ambitious integration policy. Even though in 1993, it was possible to soften Mitterrand's reservations about "the third German state" entering the EU, Vranitzky was anything but happy about this qualification. He was upset and let the French President know that he represented "the first and only single Austrian state".[56]

For a long time, French politicians – neither the conservatives nor the socialists – had not taken the Austrians and their attempts at European integration policy very seriously. But Lipponen, Brundtland, Carlsson, and Vranitzky acted on a common line: they overcame national differences that were not inconsiderable and joined the European family of social democratic parties showing relative unity and solidarity. They thus gained attention and won the approval of the other social democrats and the party representatives of the EC member states. Thanks to concerted action, they

53. M. GEHLER, *Der lange Weg nach Europa. Österreich vom Ende der Monarchie bis zur EU. Darstellung*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck/Vienna, 2002, pp.302-309; H. DRAKE, *Jacques Delors. Perspectives on a European leader*, Routledge, London/New York, 2000, pp.115-117; without reference to that speech J. DELORS, *Erinnerungen eines Europäers*, Parthas, Berlin, 2004; G. GRIN, *The Battle of the Single Market. Achievements and Economics 1945-2000*, Kegan Paul Publisher, London/New York/Bahrain, 2003, pp.307-342.
54. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006; see also P. LUIF, K. Oberregelsbacher (eds), *Austria, Finland and Sweden. The initial Years of EU membership*, Media Austria AG, Vienna 1999.
55. Interview with the former vice chancellor Dr. Erhard BUSEK in Bled, 08.06.2007.
56. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006.

managed to achieve both the SPE and the SI considering their membership application as a central issue and they successfully gathered support. Numerous initiatives and invitations took place in order to debate and coordinate common positions and official versions with respect to public relations.[57]

In brief, it may be said that the ÖVP and the SPÖ complemented each other ideally in networking on behalf of EC membership: while Mock, with the European Democrat Union (EDU),was active on the foreign policy and transnational party level, Vranitzky maintained good relations with the Nordic heads of state and of government. The original priorities with respect to the EEC/EC (ÖVP) and the EFTA (SPÖ) of the 1960s and 1970s were diversified and mixed together, a process, which finally resulted in a policy that had neither been agreed upon nor coordinated, a policy which amounted to some sort of "uniting for the attack" with two politicians (Mock and Vranitzky) who were far from suiting each other well. But the common goal of the EU nevertheless was a binding force and led to complementary parallel actions. In any case, the topic of perpetual neutrality no longer represented a serious problem abroad at this point in time.

After disagreements, at the domestic and in particular the intra-party level, on the status of Austria's political neutrality status, which had made EU accession difficult and had even prevented it for a long time, Vranitzky had managed to allay the Europe scepticism of his countrymen and to overcome the resistance of his own leading party members. He also personally stood for the programmatic shift of the SPÖ towards a market economy orientation, a change which at the reform party rally in June 1991 found its expression in the replacement of the word "Socialist" in the party's name by "Social Democratic". Franz Vranitzky received 459 out of 466 valid votes from the party delegates. In the end, a large majority of the Austrian population came out in favour of Austria joining the EU.

4. EU Membership Negotiations 1993-1994

Regarding the start of the EU membership negotiations, Chancellor Vranitzky declared in 1993 that Austria would "proceed without reservation […] and work to-

57. M. GEHLER, *Parteipolitik in transnationalen Netzwerken. Ein Vergleich zwischen SPÖ und ÖVP mit einem Ausblick ins 21. Jahrhundert*, in: M. GEHLER, W. KAISER, B. LEUCHT (eds), *Netzwerke im europäischen Mehrebenensystem. Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*, Böhlau Verlag, Vienna/Cologne, 2008, pp.165-183, here pp.172-173.

gether in solidarity on the dynamic process of the common European project".[58] The negotiations carried on by the EC with Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Austria[59] were the swiftest to date in the history of the enlargements.[60]

The Chancellor evaluated these negotiations as positive: "We have come off very well", except for the problem area agriculture. Twice there was the danger of negotiations being broken off: in the areas of agriculture (under Franz Fischler) and transit traffic (under Viktor Klima), Klima and Mock considering both at that time to leave Brussels. But the head of government, who stayed in Vienna and who was kept informed every hour, spoke out against their withdrawing from negotiations and gave the clear and strong directive, "In no case! Stay there! Fight on!". Mock was severely handicapped because of illness, and in the meantime Ferdinand Lacina and others took over the negotiations.[61]

With regard to obstacles met by Austria on its way towards EC integration in Europe, there were some quiet reservations uttered by representatives of the founding members (France and Belgium), more from the older generation than from the younger one. In the second half of the 1980s, the Soviet Union's representatives argued against Austria's EC affinities, emphasizing the obligations resulting from the State Treaty (of 15 May 1955) and the preservation of the neutrality law (of 26 October 1955). In October 1988, in talks with Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov and President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, Vranitzky was able to dispel these pseudo-objections. The United Kingdom and the United States were totally in favour of Austria joining the European Union.[62]

At his very beginning as a Chancellor with European ambitions, Vranitzky realized that he had to take up the challenge of making EU policy a matter of domestic policy and a real goal of home affairs. During the various phases of the membership

58. M. GEHLER, *17. Juli 1989: Der EG-Beitrittsantrag, Österreich und die europäische Integration 1945-1995*, in: R. STEININGER, M. GEHLER (eds), *Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert*, Bd. 2: *Vom Zweiten Weltkrieg bis zur Gegenwart*, Böhlau Verlag, Vienna/Cologne, 1997, pp.515-595, here p. 549; A. ZIEGERHOFER-PRETTENTHALER, *Europäische Integrationsgeschichte. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des österreichischen Weges nach Brüssel*, Studienverlag, Innsbruck, 2004, pp.184-190; S. MARSCHNER, *Die Geschichte und Entwicklung der Europäischen Union. Unter Berücksichtigung des Weges Österreichs in die Europäische Union. Eine dokumentarische Analyse* (Europäische Hochschulschriften Series III, Vol.1084), Frankfurt/Main, 2011, pp.134-154.
59. With regard to the neutrality issue, also see: M. SCHEICH, op.cit., pp.75-82.
60. Compare C. PRESTON, *Enlargement and Integration in the European Union*, Routledge, London/New York, 1997, here pp.87-109.
61. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp.317-318; quotation from the Interview with VRANITZKY, 6.4.2006; Interview with LACINA, 14.06.2012.
62. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp. 312-316; also see, StBKA, BK Vranitzky/AP, Box Staatsbesuche 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, Box II, Vranitzky BK-UdSSR Gesprächsthemen, 10.-13.10.1988; M. SCHEICH, op.cit., pp.55-62; *Gespräch M. S. Gorbatschows mit F. Vranitzky* [Arbeitsübersetzung aus dem Russischen], in: *Prawda*, 12.10.1988; *Aufenthalt des Bundeskanzlers in Moskau* [Übersetzung], in: *Prawda*, 13.10.1988; *Moskau und Wien*, in: *Passauer Neue Presse*, 14.10.1988; *Vranitzky: Neutralität nicht in Frage stellen*, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17.10.1988; *Die Neutralität des Landes soll nicht angetastet werden – Österreich/Antrag auf EG-Beitritt für 1989 geplant*, in: *Handelsblatt*, 19.10.1988; Personal statements VRANITZKY, p.5.

negotiations and the subsequent years of EU membership, awareness of and feelings for domestic policy often got lost. Austria's neutrality was judged and treated by the pragmatic Vranitzky in a rational way. It was and continues to be based on a constitutional law that still exists. Actually, he even argues, "one can, indeed one should maintain it – it is part of the Constitution". During his time in office as chancellor and even today, he maintains an unchanged position: in spite of being "neutral" or non-aligned,

> "Austria can be fully European and an adequate member of the international community. The essential thing is not the formal and legal status [of neutrality], but the fortune to develop new and moving ideas in order to fill others with enthusiasm".[63]

While the previous President of the European Commission Jacques Delors (1985-1994) rejected the idea of Austria maintaining its neutrality as an EU member,[64] his successor Jacques Santer (1994-1999) did not see any incompatibility.[65] Along those lines, Vice Chancellor Busek (ÖVP) argued that there was still time enough for a "new neutrality status".[66] At that time, Vranitzky also saw no reason for changing the foreign policy status of his country. He described the country's neutrality as a synonym for the state's independence and an integral part of Austria's identity.[67]

After the referendum on 12 June 1994, which ended with a positive vote of 66.6%, Austria joined the EU on 1 January 1995.[68] The Austrians arrived with the largest delegation and a number of aircrafts at the EU-summit on Corfu, where the EU treaty was to be signed. After a tug-of-war that was played out in public, the treaty was signed by four Austrian representatives: Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, Foreign Minister Alois Mock, Ambassador Manfred Scheich, who had negotiated with Brussels, and the Director General of the Federal Chancellery, Ulrich Stacher.[69]

The Chancellor was very angry that Mock, who wanted that Scheich should be given the honour to sign, declined this honour to the EU Undersecretary Brigitte Ederer (SPÖ), who had strongly supported the publicity campaign in favour of

63. Personal statements, VRANITZKY, p.5.
64. O. RATHKOLB, *Krisenmanager und Gestalter …*, op.cit., p.189.
65. The relationship between Santer and Vranitzky was a good one, see *Santer fand in Österreich Verbündete für EU-Pläne. Große Einigkeit mit Vranitzky über Regierungskonferenz 1996*, in: *Der Standard*, 12.05.1995; also StBKA, Vranitzky Private Papers, Box Integration, Punktation für Gespräch mit Kommissionspräsident Santer, 11/12.09.1995.
66. Santer sieht keine Unvereinbarkeit mit der Union und Busek meint: „Neue Neutralität" hat noch Zeit, in: *Der Standard*, 24.08.1994.
67. O. RATHKOLB, *Krisenmanager und Gestalter …*, op.cit., p.189.
68. M. GEHLER, *Vom Marshall-Plan bis zur EU …*, op.cit., pp.167-206 and 209-241; A. PELINKA (ed.), EU-Referendum. Zur Praxis direkter Demokratie in Österreich (Schriftenreihe des Zentrums für angewandte Politikforschung 6), Signum, Vienna, 1994; concerning domestic criticisms because of Vranitzky's pro EU position and the EU-propaganda of the Austrian government see F. HESCHL, *Drinnen oder draußen? Die öffentliche österreichische EU-Beitrittsdebatte vor der Volksabstimmung 1994,* Böhlau, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2002, pp.121-124, pp.226-229.
69. *Der Standard*, 14.06.1994 and 24.06.1994.

accession and who was very popular.[70] Thus, an extremely unpleasant atmosphere which even threatened to escalate, prevailed on Corfu among the Austrians. Moreover, there was irritation and disagreement because no chair had been provided for the Federal President among the invited guests, so a place had to be added to the table and an extra chair brought in. There could be no discussion of a closed session. According to the press, the "evil spirit of Corfu" had made itself known. Austrian foreign policy did not make a good impression. To Vranitzky, Mock as a "well-known anti-socialist" was a "jealous Foreign Minister", an "EU Foreign Minister", and a "Balkan Foreign Minister".[71]

IV. The Charlemagne Prize

Vranitzky considered the late 1980s up to the middle of the 1990s as having been the heyday of European social democracy concerning international cooperation and mutual understanding in the context of Austria's European integration policy. He developed his ideas on "Europe" on different occasions and at different places, in public speeches or at political party meetings, in lectures at university seminars, in articles or in interviews. The Charlemagne Prize and the meetings in Aachen were good opportunities for discussing and exchanging ideas, launching thoughts, expressing points of view, pushing arguments, and pursuing intentions. When Felipe Gonzales, the Spanish socialist, won the Charlemagne Prize in 1994, it was Vranitzky, as a mere member of an EU candidate country, who was invited to deliver the tribute speech.[72]

On 25 May 1995, Vranitzky himself was awarded the International Charlemagne Prize of Aachen in the Coronation Hall of the city hall, the former imperial palace, as the announcement read,

> "in acknowledgement of his many years of unwavering commitment to the strengthening of Europe, in particular to the connection of the regions of Eastern Europe to the European Union".[73]

This last point was surprising because Vranitzky had not pursued a policy that was as actively or prominently focussed on Central and Eastern Europe as Erhard Busek's was. Vranitzky's nomination was also remarkable because from an Austrian public point of view, it was actually Foreign Minister Alois Mock from the ÖVP who had pushed the issue of Austria's EU membership so strongly. Mock seemed to be the

70. F. VRANITZKY, *Politische Erinnerungen*, op.cit., pp.320-321.
71. Interview with VRANITZKY, 06.04.2006.
72. Personal statements VRANITZKY, p.4.
73. http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/1995/rede_des_oberbuergermeisters_der_stadt_aachen_dr_juergen_linden.html (6 July 2012).

one responsible for the EU accession of his country. Therefore, he was everybody's darling and was even called "Mr. Europe".[74]

But there were other motives and also many good reasons for Vranitzky's nomination. His European integration policies showed some differences compared to those of Mock. According to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the former acted as a "mild supporter", while the latter was characterized as a "blazing champion".[75]

The *Direktorium der Gesellschaft für die Verleihung des Internationalen Karlspreises* (the Board of Directors of the Society for the Awarding of the International Charlemagne Prize) mentioned five reasons for Vranitzky's nomination:

- Vranitzky was chiefly responsible for the activities of the Austrian government regarding the accession to the European Communities and the achievement of a broad consensus as well as strong support among the Austrian population (66.6%);
- his contribution to the long-term preparations for Austria's EC application (close relationship of the Austrian schilling and the German mark, and the European Economic Space EES);
- his readiness to declare Austria's solidarity with an active participation within a new European Foreign and Security System;
- his strong opposition against any kind of right-wing populism and German-nationalism in Austria, excluding for that reason the Haider FPÖ from government, and last but not least;
- the opening of the Austrian-Hungarian boarder in September 1989, which was seen as an ample proof of the country's purpose to serve as a bridge between the Central-Eastern and Western parts of Europe, contributing consequently to Europe's peaceful unification.[76]

At the ceremony in Aachen the Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen delivered the tribute speech and paid homage to the prize-winner as a "key figure in contemporary Europe", a "Central European", "a sportsman", and "a man coming from the working class who has not forgotten his roots".[77]

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74. H. WACHTER, *Alois Mock – Der Unberührbare*, in: *Der Standard – Album*, 26.08.1994, see also the report *Ohne Protokoll*, in: *Salzburger Nachrichten*, 27.05.1995; to "Mr. Europe" (connected with Mock's ambitions for Chancellorship) and Vranitzky see: H. SCHNEIDER, *Alleingang nach Brüssel. Österreichs EG-Politik (*Europäische Schriften 66), Europa Union Verlag, Bonn, 1990, pp.202-204.
75. *Österreich: Debatte über das strittige Thema Europa: Die Angst vor dem Echo aus Brüssel*, in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30.06.1989.
76. The text of the certificate from the Foundation by the Board of Directors of the Society for the Awarding of the International Charlemagne Prize to the Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, Franz Vranitzky, may be found in: *Vranitzky erhält in Aachen Karlspreis. Einsatz für Europa wird gewürdigt*, in: *Der Standard*, 24.05.1995, also StBKA, Private Papers Dr. Franz Vranitzky, "Zeitungsordner Aachener Karlspreis, *Ansprache von Bundeskanzler Dr. Franz Vranitzky anläßlich der Verleihung des internationalen Karlspreises zu Aachen* [with some hand written additional remarks], 25.05.1995.
77. http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/1995/laudatio_von_paavo_lipponen_ministerpraesident_der_republik_finnland.html (5 July 2012).

Vranitzky felt honoured by this prestigious award and spoke, among other things, on the European topic.[78] He accepted the prize as a representative of Austria and he interpreted it as a confirmation and a challenge to continue in that direction. He was glad and serious at the same time. Europe was not any longer an illusion, but a concrete utopia, which became reality. This concrete utopia was first of all not so much an economic but rather a cultural utopia that Europe was experiencing at the moment. Vranitzky did not forget to emphasize the historical significance of Austria's neutrality during the Kreisky era. In that way, he also underlined its current values. Vranitzky explained and described neutrality policy as an active contemporary policy, promoting peace, contributing to stability in Europe, and offering good services in order to overcome international conflicts. The ability to maintain peace greatly depends upon social stability both within and outside of Europe.[79]

V. Preliminary Analysis of Vranitzky's Personal Profile and European Integration Policies

The case of Vranitzky shows that a biographical approach can contribute to a better understanding of the European integration history, which often is seen as too "abstract", "cold", and "technical", while not being concrete, personal, and lively enough. This case also shows the historical backgrounds and motives of a national policy toward Europe,[80] how it works, and how an applicant state could attain full membership in the European Communities. The biographical approach can provide knowledge about Europe and its integration history that is not only supplementary, but also totally new. Institutional and structural approaches need further explanations. The biographical and network-oriented approach can help in that way. The example of Vranitzky's political role also makes very clear how he managed to convince the leading governing party in Austria at that time – the former Socialist and then Social Democratic Party – to join the European Union.

Vranitzky is a likeable character. This also presents a challenge for historians undertaking research on him. His positive image influences historical judgements on his person, too. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to mention very critical or negative aspects of his biography as well as of his personal attitude and political

78. StBKA. Private papers of Dr. Franz Vranitzky, "Zeitungsordner Aachener Karlspreis", Speech by Chancellor Dr. Franz Vranitzky on the occasion of the awarding of the International Charlemagne Prize at Aachen, 25.05.1995 ("Es gilt das gesprochene Wort!"); with slight differences: http://www.karlspreis.de/preistraeger/1995/rede_von_franz_vranitzky.html (05.07.2012).
79. Ibid.; *Auf Schwache achten. Franz Vranitzky der 37. Träger des Aachener Karlspreises*, in: *Amerika-Woche*, 03.06.1995; for the reference to Vranitzky see O. MÜLLER, B. VINCKEN (eds), *Herausforderungen im Zeichen der Krise. Verleihung des Internationalen Karlspreises zu Aachen 2011 an Jean-Claude Trichet*, einhard, Aachen, 2011, p.266.
80. In general see: M. GEHLER, *At the Heart of Integration: Understanding National European Policy*, in: W. KAISER, A. VARSORI (eds), *European Union History. Themes and Debates*, Chippenham, Eastbourne, 2010, pp.85-108.

activities during his term in office as chancellor of Austria. As a politician and statesman, he did not only speak "correctly" and "honestly", he also acted very "seriously". He was perceived as an athletic and sympathetic man, as well. There were no political or personal affairs or real political scandals, associated with his career. These circumstances are important and should be kept in mind.

The background of Vranitzky's political ideas with respect to Europe has to be seen less in the end of the Cold War in Europe in the years 1989-1990 than in the change in world politics starting from the middle of the 1980s. It was a time of rapid transformation. This period strengthened the need for flexible, new, and modern politicians (criteria which Vranitzky could easily meet) in order to face the challenges and to begin reforms. It was also the time of Austria's semi-political isolation due to the Waldheim crisis (1986-1988). Vranitzky, who was called a "sober agent of change without the Waldheim touch",[81] therefore had to fulfill a double function, firstly serving as chancellor and secondly as a kind of substitute for the federal president. His foreign policy agenda was challenging. During the Waldheim years (1986-1992), he was very active in establishing good international relations.[82]

The White Paper on the Single Market by EC Commission President Jacques Delors from 1985 and the Single European Act (which came into force in 1987) played a not unsubstantial role for Vranitzky's sober, rational, and pragmatic decision to apply for Austria's accession to the EC.[83]

Vranitzky acted as an internationally recognized statesman. There is no clue in his biographical or political background as to having been a European federalist or even idealist or having already been enthusiastic about Europe in the federal sense from during his youth. Rather, it was his insight into the needs for the reform and modernization of Austria's politics, economy, and society that led him to a pro-EC stance. From his social origins and upbringings, Vranitzky retained a clearly anti-fascist and anti-Nazi socialist leaning which however did not turn him into a clearly defined socialist internationalist, but rather made him into an Austrian patriot and socialized him as an international. As an expert in finance, trade, and economics, he understood the EC as an economic challenge, but he also recognized the cultural and historical dimension of Europe. In the end, his major interest and main goal was to lead Austria with the application for full membership as a self-confident country into the European Communities.[84]

Vranitzky's major achievement was to convince large parts of his own party and of the Austrian population to join not only the European Union as a full member but

81. According to the headline of the Swiss newspaper, in: *Der Bund*, 01.02.1988.
82. StBKA, Private Papers Dr. Franz Vranitzky, "Zeitungsordner Aachener Karlspreis", Franz Vranitzky. Österreichischer Politiker; Bundeskanzler (1986-); SPÖ, Dipl.-Kaufmann, Dr.
83. Concerning Austria's pragmatic approach towards the European Communities see: M. GÄDEL, *Vereint marschieren – getrennt schlagen! Die Schweiz, Österreich, Norwegen und Schweden zwischen EWR und Beitritt zur Europäischen Union*, Haupt, Bern/Stuttgart/Vienna, 2007, pp.122-139.
84. F. VRANITZKY, A. THURNER, *Franz Vranitzky im Gespräch ...*, op.cit., pp.48-94; F. VRANITZKY, R. WEINZIERL (eds), *Europa braucht wieder Politik*, Löcker, Vienna, 2005.

also the European Monetary Union (EMU), as well. In that sense, Vranitzky acted as a European leader. He fully agreed with the Maastricht criteria, but advocated also a social policy, a balanced employment policy, and the preservation of the Austrian social partnership. During his term in office (1986-1997), he was successful in maintaining Austria's social and welfare state policy which was guaranteed by the Social Democrats within the Grand Coalition. On the European level, there were serious limitations to such a policy, and to this day a Community policy on social union still does not exist.

Austria's participation in the EMU also paved the way towards a stability-oriented Austrian and European currency policy. Vranitzky's integration policy followed a slow, step-by-step strategy. First he aimed at joining the European Economic Space (EES), then the EU, and finally the EMU. In contrast, the question whether to join the European transatlantic security system was not his first concern.

When Vranitzky is asked about one of his most important political success, he spontaneously answers that it was Austria's EU membership in 1995. According to this author, his main political success was to combine Austria's neutrality with the EU membership and to maintain its foreign policy status within the European Union. In a broader idealistic and moral sense, his greatest achievement was on one hand the self-critical rethinking of Austria's past with regard to Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust and, on the other hand, the acceptance of European integration and EU membership by the Austrians. The "moral obligation" which Vranitzky felt for Austria to become part of "Europe" has to be seen with regard to the debate of Waldheim's wartime past and Haider's right-wing populism. During his entire term of office, Vranitzky tried to do everything he could to isolate Haider's Freedom Party. When he took office in 1986, he dissolved the coalition that still existed with the FPÖ of Haider and decided to build up a new Grand Coalition with the ÖVP. Any combination with regard to a new coalition with the FPÖ or an inclusion of FPÖ members in his government was strictly rejected by Vranitzky. The other side of the coin was an increase in the number of Haider supporters. This gradual rise in FPÖ sympathizers led the party to win over 20% of the votes. Thus Vranitzky's policy of excluding Haider's Freedom Party was only partially and temporarily successful. In retrospect, this quarantine strategy failed,[85] because his successor Viktor Klima (1997-2000) could not prevent the FPÖ from participating in a right-wing coalition government (with the ÖVP) as governing party in 2000.[86]

In conclusion, Vranitzky was more a state politician than a party politician. However, he also developed an efficient network with the socialists and social democrats of Europe, particularly with those from the Scandinavian countries.

85. H. CZERNIN, op.cit.
86. R. ULFGARD, *Norm Consolidation in the European Union: The EU 14-Austria Crisis in 2000* (Acta Wexionensia No.75), Växjö University Press, Gothenburg, 2005; M. GEHLER, *"Preventive Hammer Blow" or Boomerang? The EU "Sanction" Measures against Austria 2000*, in: G. BISCHOF, A. PELINKA, M. GEHLER, *Austria in the European Union* (=*Contemporary Austrian Studies* Vol. 10), Transaction, New Brunswick/London, 2002, pp.180-222.

It can be said that the always correct, consistent, and reliable Vranitzky behaved in a disciplined, well-educated, calm, and quiet manner during times of turbulence, and often acted as an Austrian patriot. His policy was more reform-oriented than reform-intensified.[87] As a hesitant modernizer, his policy of privatization remained cautious.

Along with Kreisky,[88] Vranitzky was one of the most highly regarded post-war Austrian politicians. Gerhard Schröder described him as "a reformer, moralist, and European".[89] He had a broad horizon and saw economic developments within the larger context of history, policy, and society. In that latter sense, Vranitzky can also be seen as a kind of Schumpeterian (in the sense of the Austrian economist, Joseph Alois Schumpeter).[90]

87. See M. GEHLER, *Die Zweite Republik – zwischen Konsens und Konflikt. Historischer Überblick (1945-2005)*, in: H. DACHS, P. GERLICH, H. GOTTWEIS, H. KRAMER, V. LAUBER, W.C. MÜLLER, E. TÁLOS (eds), *Politik in Österreich. Das Handbuch*, Manz Verlag, Vienna, 2006, pp. 35-51, here pp.43-47.
88. Concerning a comparative approach on modernization and socialization, see I. ETZERSDORFER, *From the Sphinx with – to the Sphinx without a Puzzle. A subjective leadership-perception – Comparison between Bruno Kreisky and Franz Vranitzky*, in: *Contemporary Austrian Studies*, 7(1999), pp.56-77.
89. G. SCHRÖDER, *Reformer, Moralist und Europäer*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp. 223-228.
90. Arguing in that direction is D. STIEFEL, *Franz Vranitzky – ein Schumpeterianer?*, in: C. KNEHS-VRANITZKY, P. GROSS, S. MAXONUS, R. WEINZIERL (eds), op.cit., pp.233-237, here p.236.