



Austrian Armed Forces (AAF)

Association of Catholic Soldiers (ACS)

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What is the meaning of democracy in your military environment?

The Austrian Armed Forces are embedded in the democratic system of the Republic of Austria. They are controlled by the democratically elected political representatives carried out by the Federal Minister of Defence and Sports. As a consequence, military operations inside and outside of Austria are possible and authorised only after the democratic decision-making process has been concluded in parliament (“National Council”). The embedment of the Austrian Armed Forces in the democratic system of the Republic of Austria is also characterised by the constitutional role of the President of State in his capacity as commander-in-chief.



What is the meaning of democracy in your military environment?

Within the realms of the Austrian Armed Forces democracy is filled with life by way of (direct) elections of interest groups (workforce/servicemen) delegates. Moreover, our personnel have the opportunity to realise their potential in defence-related associations, which include religious lay organisations, sport associations, and historic-savvy clubs.



Do you have an example of working for peace in your country?

So far all military operations of the Austrian Armed Forces in foreign countries have been guided by the ideas of peacekeeping, peace enforcement, or peace support.

The following missions are stated to give an impression of our commitment to peace:

- UNFICYP, UNDOF, UNIFIL
- EUFOR ALTHEA
- RMS
- ISAF
- AFDRU



Do you have an example of working for peace in your country?

The military law of the Republic of Austria also enables operations inside Austria's territory, in order to maintain peace and security and to defend the constitutional office-holders and authorities (Military Service Act, para 2 (1) lit b, c). The National Defence Academy of the Austrian Armed Forces is also tasked with peace-related and social research (e.g. by way of the Institute for Peace Support and Conflict Management – IFK). The Institute for Religion and Peace makes its contribution to peace-related efforts in form of meeting the religious needs of the military personnel.



Do you have an example of working for peace in your country?

Moreover, the Austrian Armed Forces pursue a vivid exchange (of knowledge) in terms of international training and education cooperation (e.g. the Kofi Annan School of Peace Studies, CIMIC, ATARIS). Special training courses for UN personnel are held on a regular basis. Austrian military personnel are also active in UN/OSCE monitoring missions and training missions of foreign troops in their countries of origin – also in crisis regions. The Austrian Military Service Act enables the maintaining of internal peace and security by deploying the armed forces in assistance operations in support of the public and civilian sector.



What would you like to tell the world about peace established by military?

Military forces are unsuited for establishing permanent peace. During their use they provide the environment needed for the development of civilian structures, for the implementation of order and security, and for the initiation of a peace process. Military forces are the last resort, when peace cannot be established in a milder way (e.g. diplomatic means). Military forces are unable to establish peace without the use of arms.

Peace which is seemingly gained by military forces is open to influence-taking, creates fronts, is fragile and unfair. Present-day military operations of the Austrian Armed Forces are designed to support the peace process in the respective crisis region, thus also weakening international waves of migration.



Ten Commandments for soldiers today

„Let us find the “Ten Commandments for soldiers today, by researching the roots of our belief and faith, given to us as a guideline for soldier’s life in peace and during military missions“:

We are able to refer to results already existing.

- **The guidelines of the Catholic Military Chaplaincy in the German armed forces and**
- **the 8 guidelines from the famous and important Declaration of the AMI General Assembly, Berlin, October 2010, “The Christian Soldier in the Service of Just Peace”, listed under chapter 39 “Guidelines for the Christian Soldier”. All these results have been achieved after performing intensive consultations, discussions and workshops of our German comrades and of the competent bodies of AMI.**



GKS Guiding Principles

- (1) – Deeply rooted in faith
- (2) – For justice and freedom
- (3) – Morally settled
- (4) – Politically educated
- (5) – Highly competent
- (6) – Faithfully obedient
- (7) – Committed to peace
- (8) – Open for the like-minded
- (9) – Striving for cooperation
- (10) – Open to ecumenism